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Alfred

A Guide to Better Bass Lines for Bassists, Arrangers & Composers

CHUCK ARCHARD

blues rock jazz funk latin soca R&B ska bebop reggae

NATIONAL GUITAR WORKSHOP

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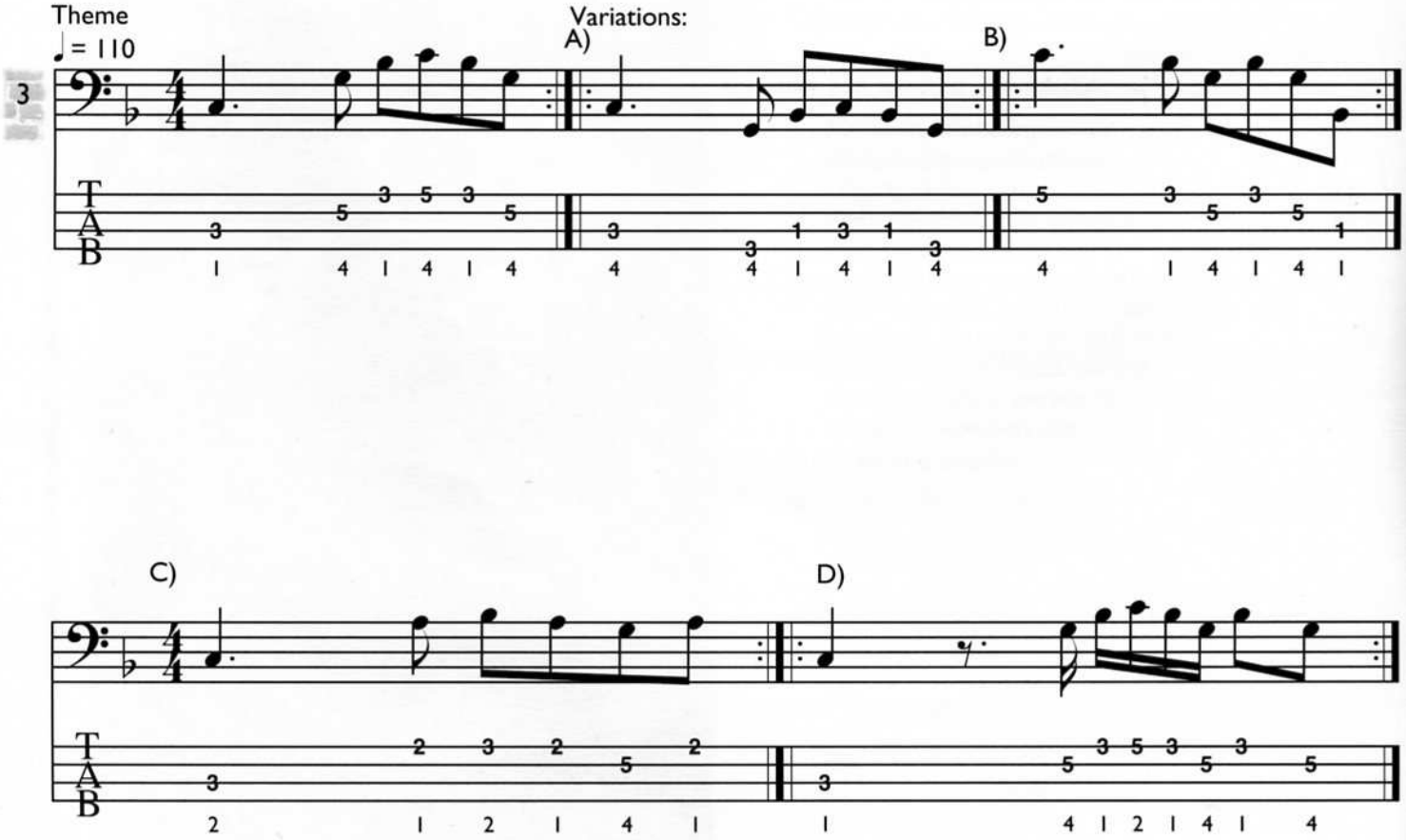
Theme & Variation

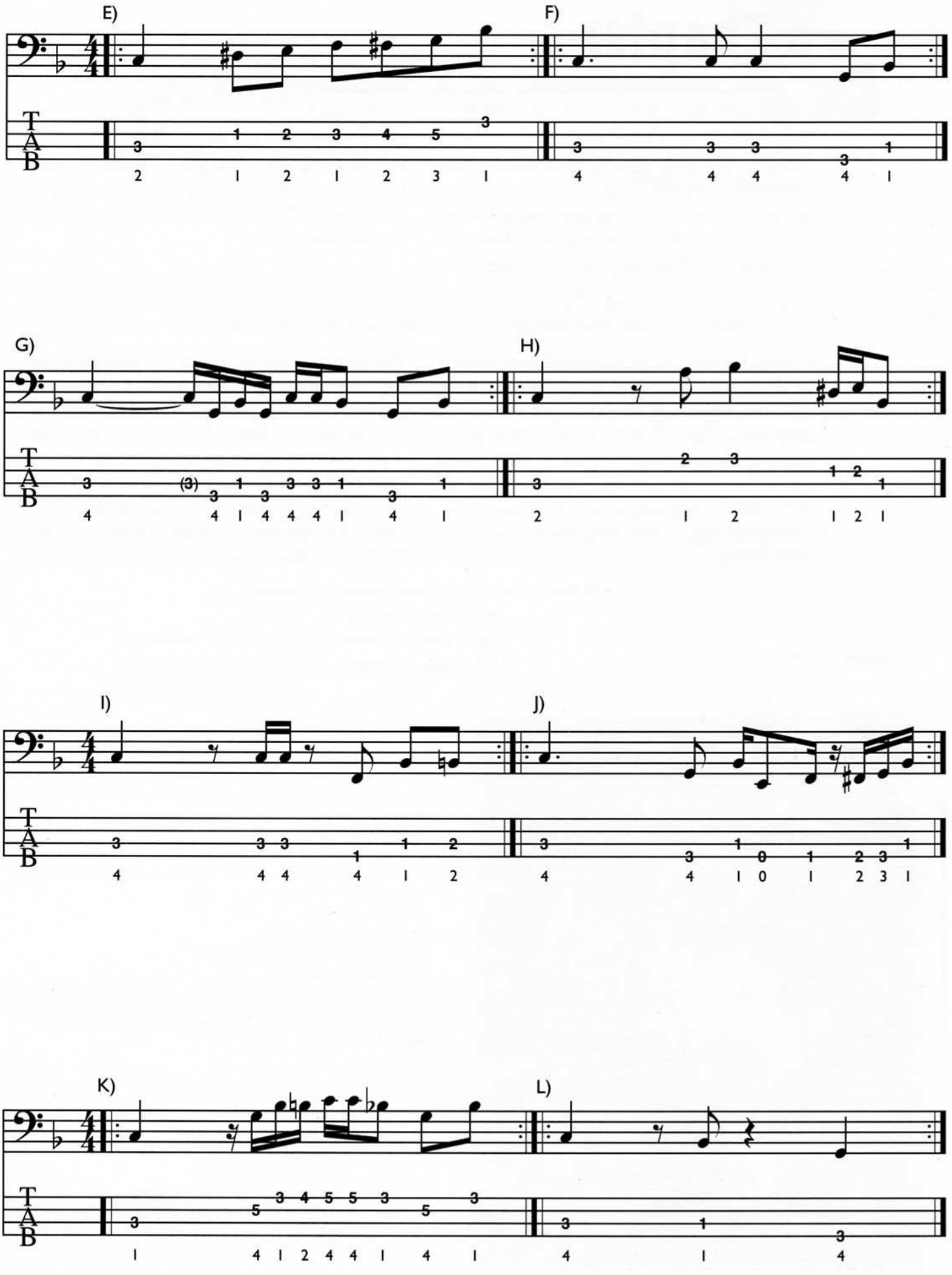
Below are some general variations you can apply to bass lines. You can use these ideas throughout the remainder of the book and, hopefully, in your day to day playing. Some of these variations may seem to get far away from the theme, but if you play through all of these patterns a few times you'll hear common notes and rhythms between them. All of the patterns start on the root. The ♭7th and the 5th of the chords are prominent and the dotted quarter/eighth note rhythmic pattern is suggested in nearly all of the patterns.

Here is what you'll find in Example 3:

Funk/Rock Theme

- **A) Change the octave**
- **B) Change the contour (up or down)**
- **C) Change the intervals**
- **D) Change the rhythm**
- **E) Use notes not found in the chord. These are called chromatic passing tones.**
- **F) Simplify**
- **G-L) More variations using different combinations**




E)
F)
G)
H)
I)
J)
K)
L)

Chapter 2

The Blues

The blues is a great place to start building bass lines because it is one of the most commonly used forms in popular music. The blues has influenced jazz, rock'n'roll, R&B, funk, rap, etc. Artists as diverse as Louis Armstrong and The Rolling Stones have played and sung the blues. Anyone creating bass lines should have a basic understanding of the blues because it is still a vital and evolving musical style.

The blues is a unique style because it has two definitions. It can be a "feeling" or a song form.

A blues feeling is often associated with sadness or loneliness. Many blues lyrics deal with these emotions and the music can be very powerful. Most players agree that the blues can't be faked. It should reveal a musician's soul. A blues feeling can be played or sung in any style of music. Listen to Ray Charles sing *America* and you'll hear a great example of a non-blues song being sung with a blues feeling.

The second definition has to do with the blues *form* or chord progression. A chord progression is a succession of related chords. The blues progression is a twelve-measure form that uses the I, IV and V chords of a particular key (see the chart on page 95 to find these chords in any key). The majority of blues tunes use dominant (7) chords. For that reason, we often refer to a *major blues* as a *dominant blues*.

G Major blues uses the following chords:
G7 is the I chord
C7 is the IV chord
D7 is the V chord

PHOTO CREDIT LISA SEIFERT / COURTESY OF STAR FILE, INC.

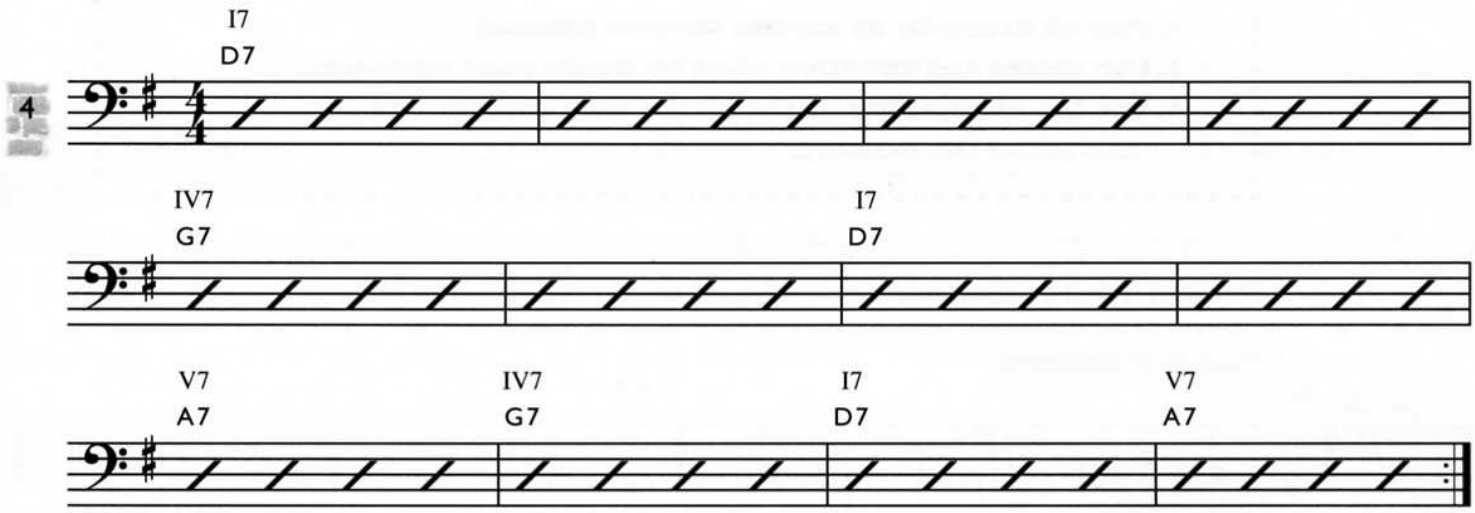
Willie Dixon

played the bass
behind such blues legends
as Muddy Waters,
Little Walter
and Howlin' Wolf.
His songwriting credits
include blues standards like
Hoochie Coochie Man,
I Just Want to Make Love to You,
Spoonful *and*
Backdoor Man.

The Twelve-Bar Blues

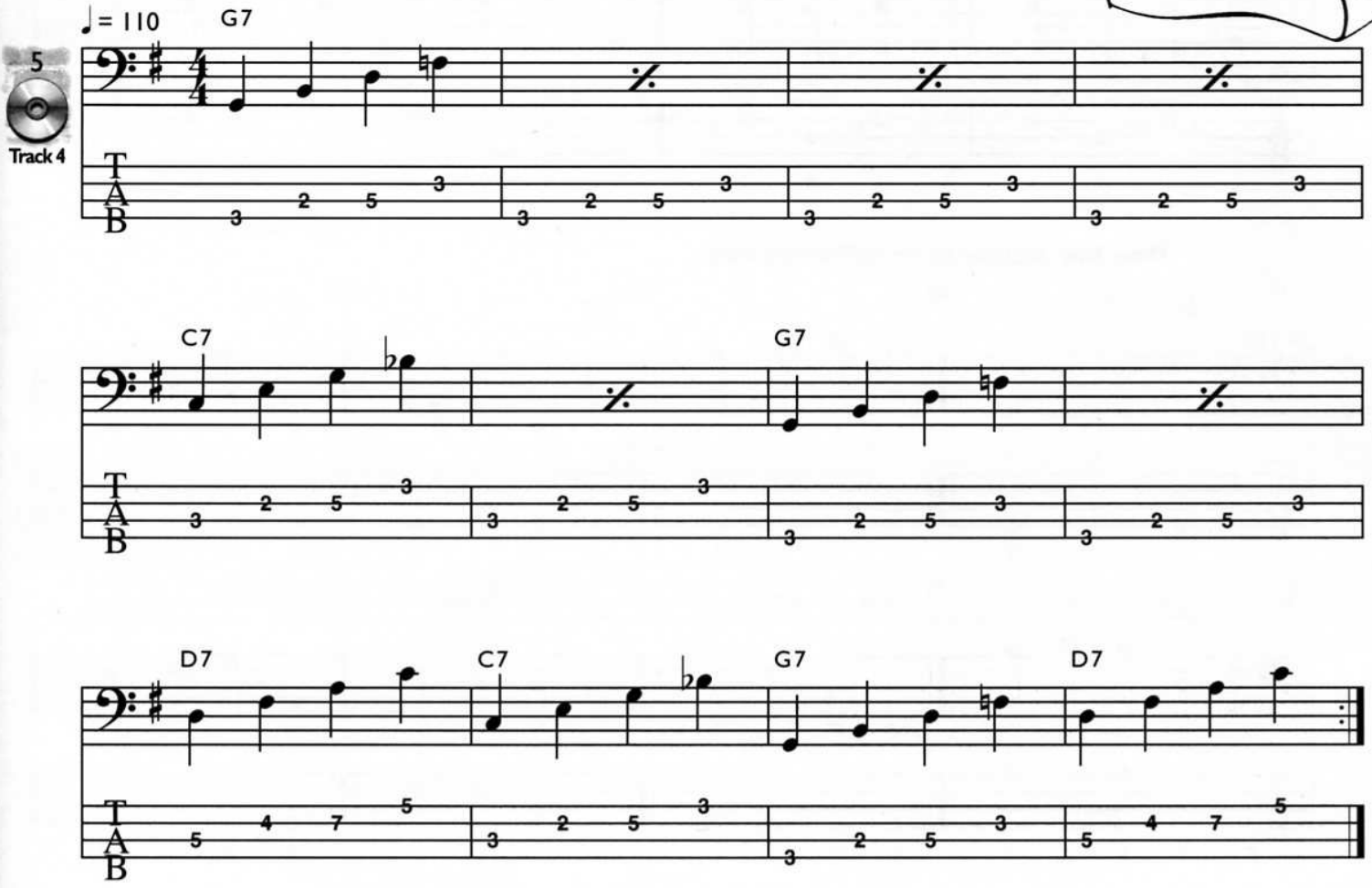
The blues is a very diverse style. Many books have been written about all the great players that have put their individual stamp on the music. Cities and regions like Memphis, Chicago, New Orleans, Texas and Mississippi are well known for their particular brand of blues. Yet, with all this diversity, the one thing that remains constant is the twelve-bar blues progression. It is essential that you memorize this progression in every key. Here it is in the key of G Major written in standard chord notation. As you play, outline the 1 (root), 3, 5 and ♭7 of every chord. The slashes represent the four beats of each measure. This kind of notation is called a *chord chart*.

Here is the chord progression:



Below, the harmonies are outlined. This is an important building block for creating a good bass part for any progression.

NOTE PAD:
𝄎 = repeat the previous measure



Walking Bass

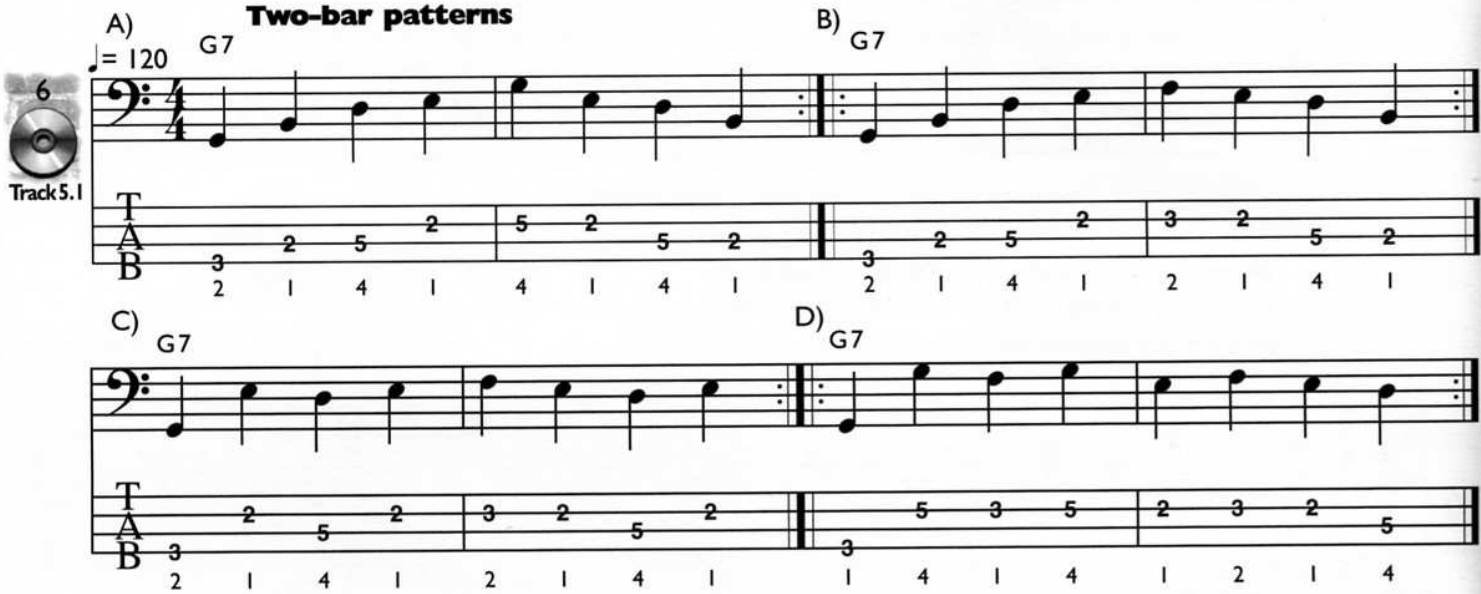
Walking bass lines are very common in blues and jazz styles. Although the rhythm is quite simple, four quarter notes per bar, there are infinite possibilities for connecting your lines.

Here are some suggestions you should follow for all the bass lines found in the next eight chapters. Following these suggestions will maximize your bass line building skills.

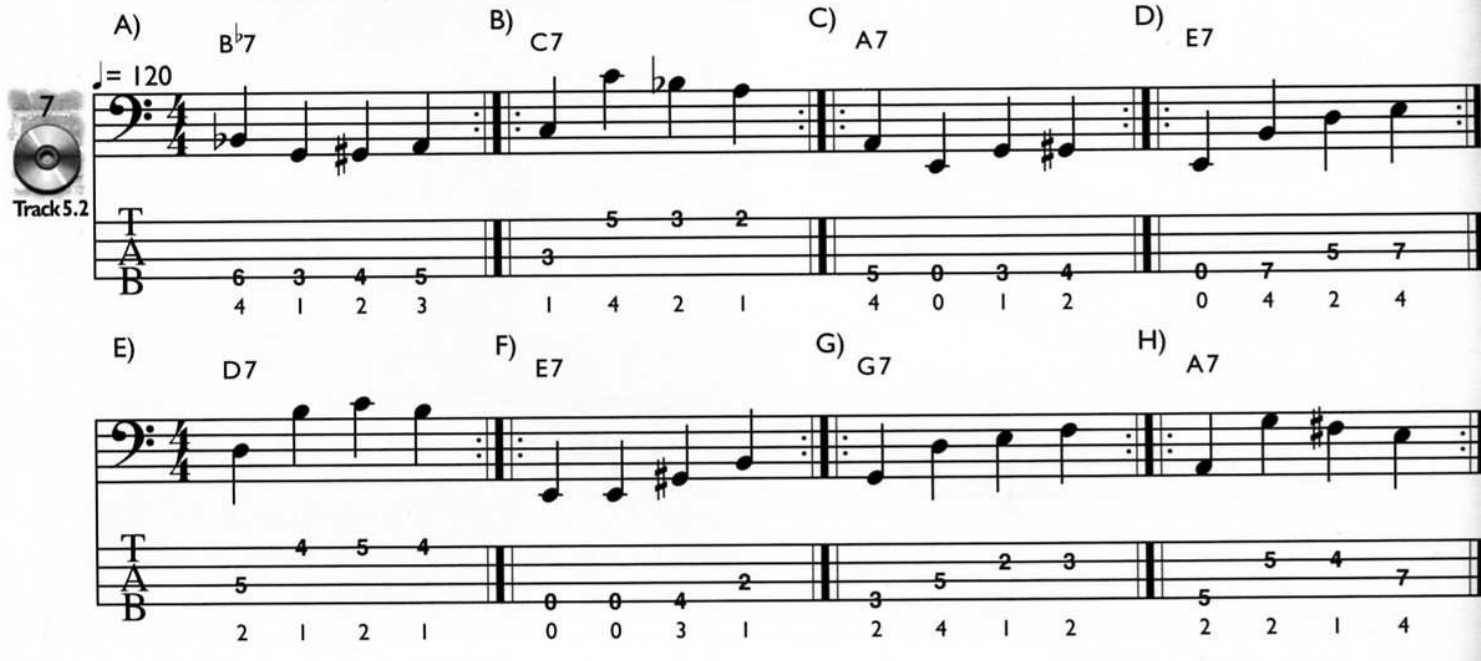
1. Play all examples in every key.
2. Play all examples at various tempos (speeds).
3. Use theme and variation ideas to create your own lines.
4. Use the discography at the end of each chapter and LISTEN to the masters.

Let's start with the most common bass walks and build from there. Have fun!

Two-bar patterns

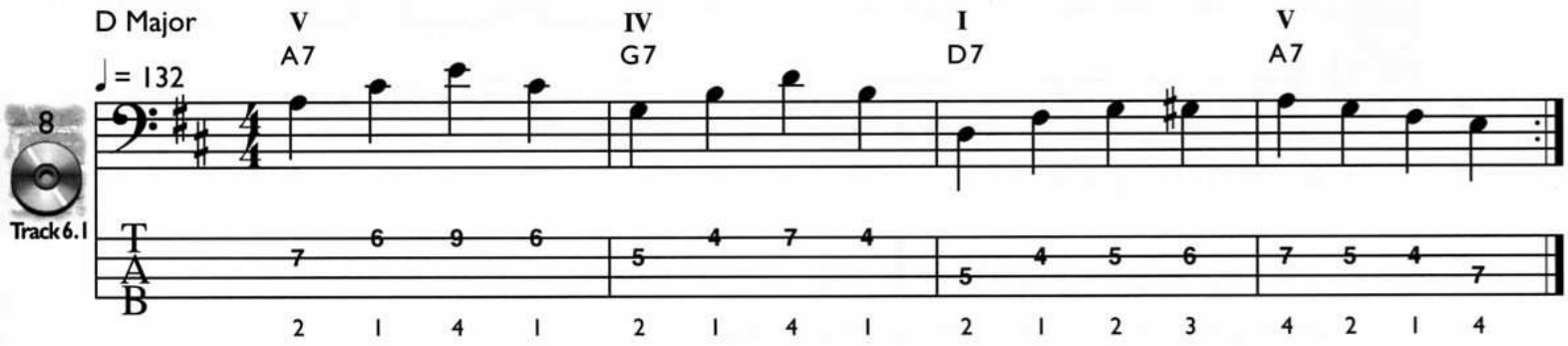


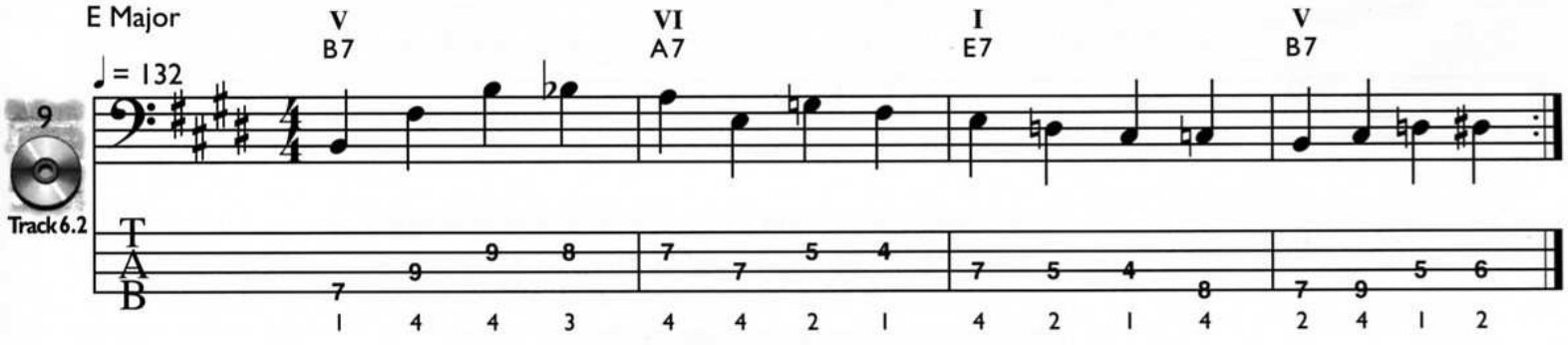
One-bar patterns in different keys

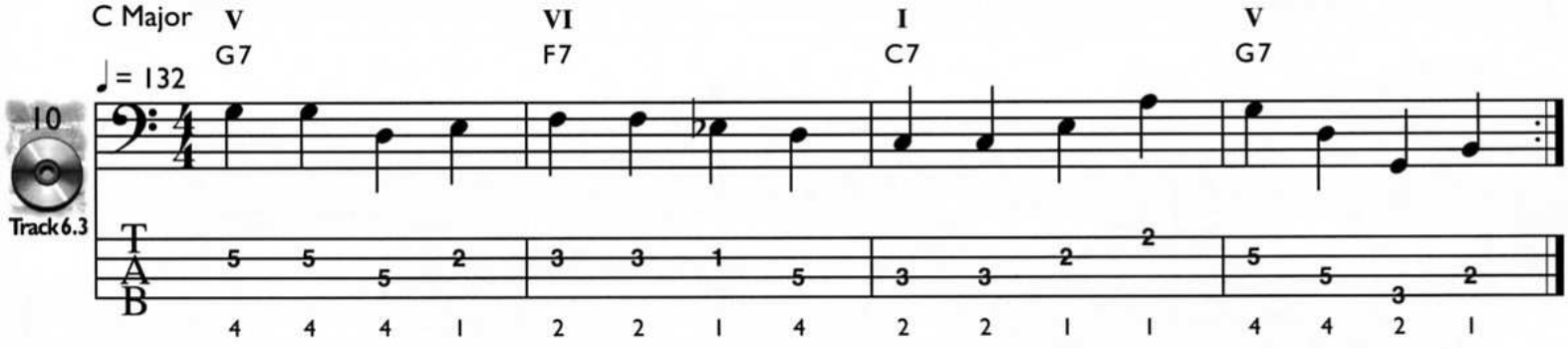


Turnarounds

The last four bars of the blues are called a turnaround because they bring the form back to the first bar for another run through the tune. This works because the turnaround ends with a V chord, which always sounds like it wants to go to the I chord—where the progression begins. Just play these examples and you'll hear this effect. Smooth and logical turnarounds are essential in good bass lines. Here are some very common walking bass turnarounds.

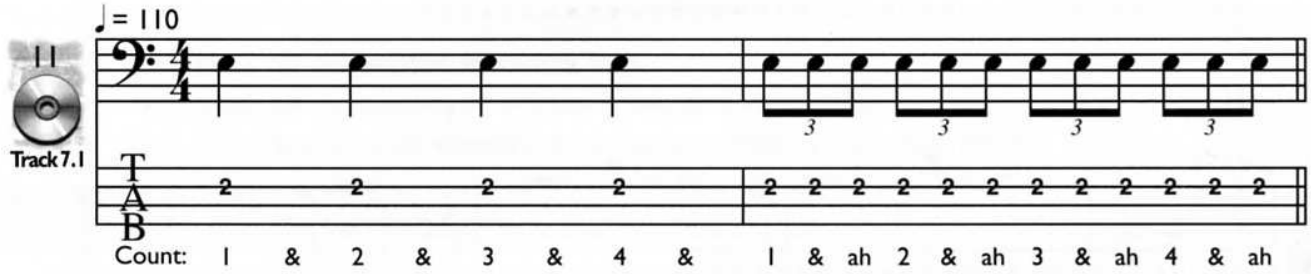




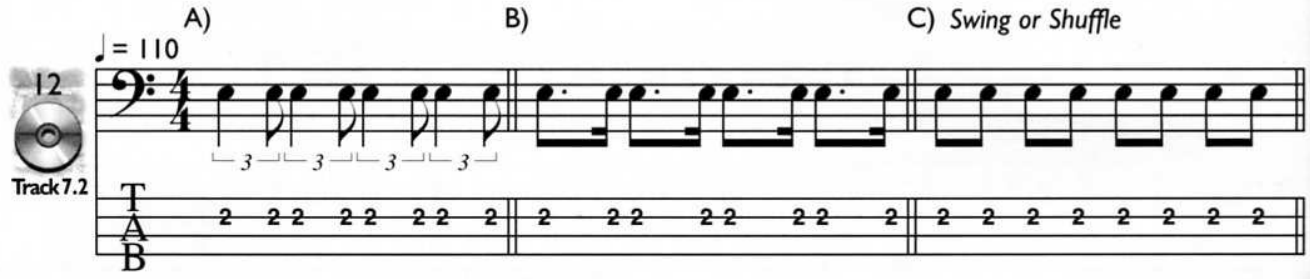


Shuffle & Swing

The shuffle is one of the coolest grooves a bassist can play. To get a handle on this groove, you have to understand the concept of *swing eighths* and *straight eighths*. Straight eighths are counted with an even feel and swing eighths are counted with a *triplet* feel. This is often called a shuffle. A triplet occurs when one beat is divided into three equal parts:

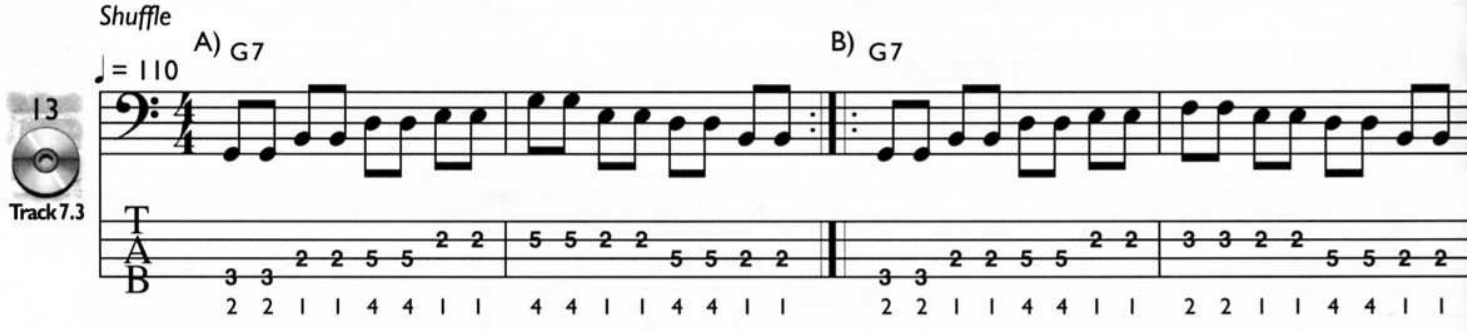


Swing eighths are often written three different ways:



All shuffle and swing examples in this book, will be written in *straight eighths* (as regular eighth notes). It will be up to you to interpret them correctly. Shuffles will always be indicated at the beginning of the example or song.

Here are the blues patterns from page 26 now written in eighth notes. Both of these patterns are classic lines. In fact, "B" is often called "the 1, 3, 5, 6, ♭7 pattern" because of the sequence of the notes. Play both of these patterns with the swing eighth feel and get the shuffle groove movin'!

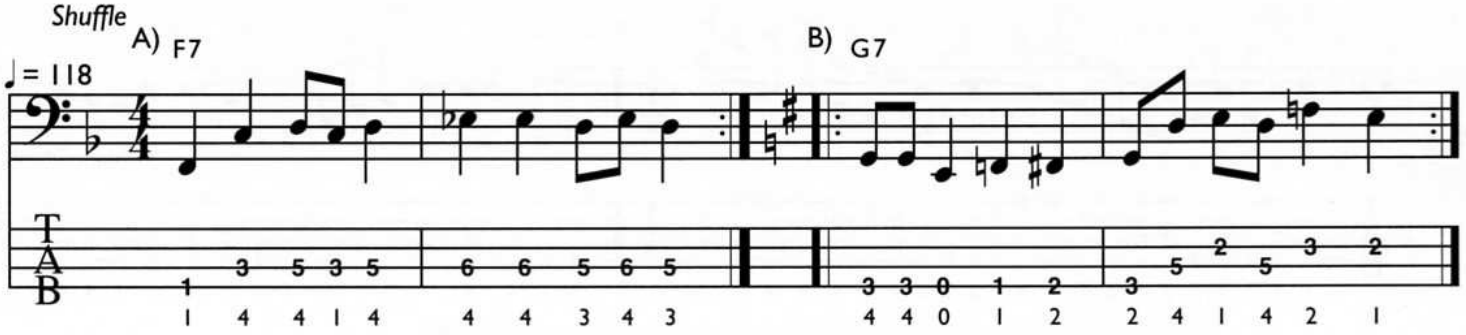


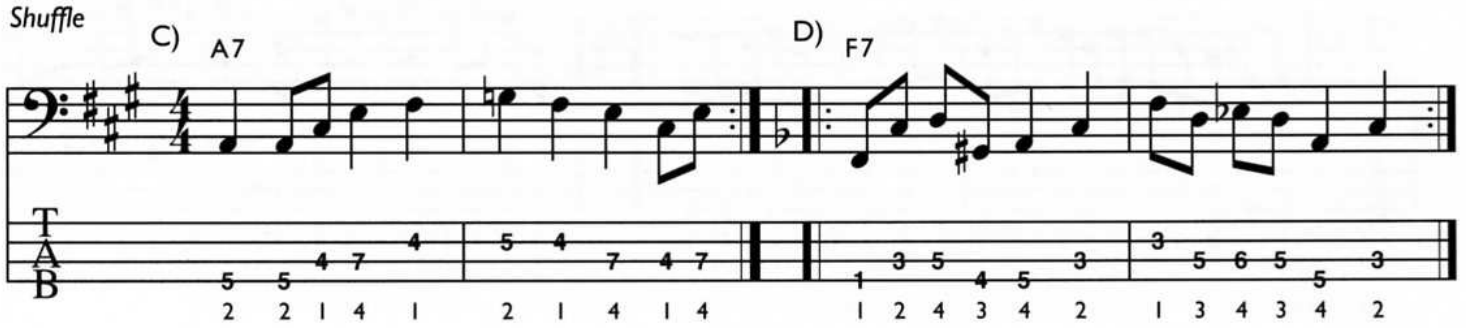
More Shuffles

Here are some shuffle lines in the style of such early blues greats as Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker and Willie Dixon. Notice how these lines mix up walking bass, swing eighths and triplets to create the shuffle groove. This was a very common practice among early blues players. In fact, many early shuffles were based on just the walking bass style. Keep that in mind when you are playing older styles.

Two-bar patterns

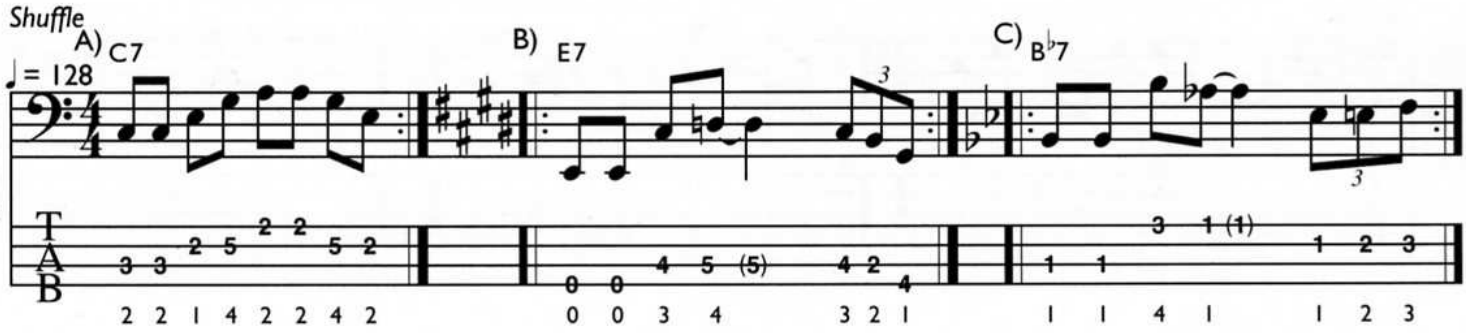
14
Track 8.1

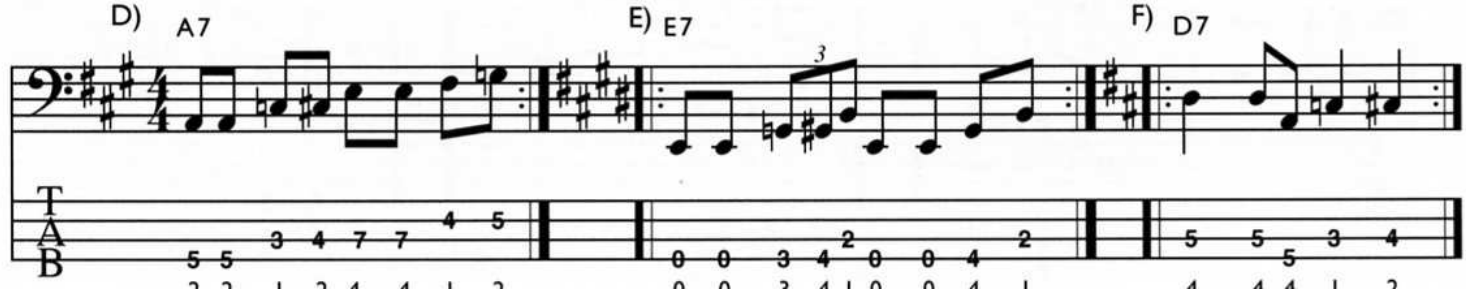




One bar patterns

15
Track 8.2



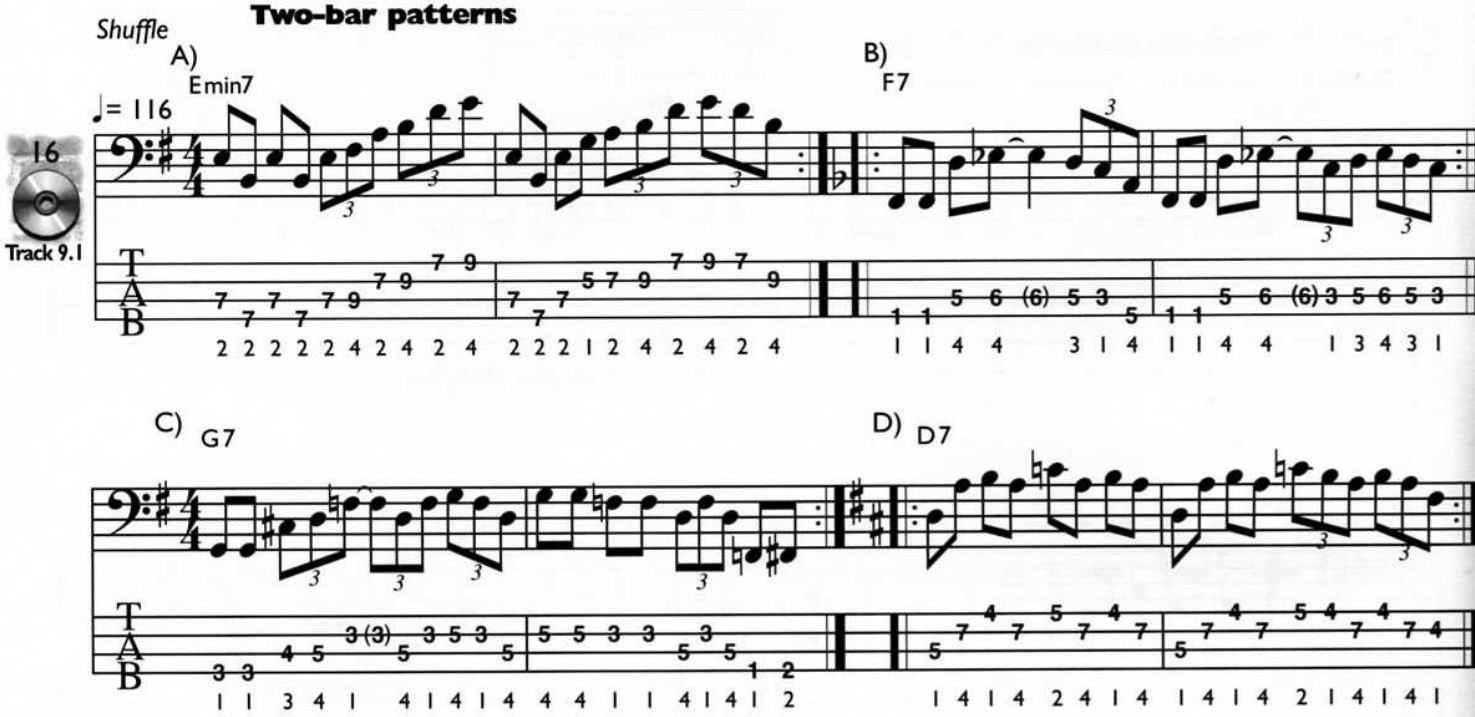


Keep Shufflin'!

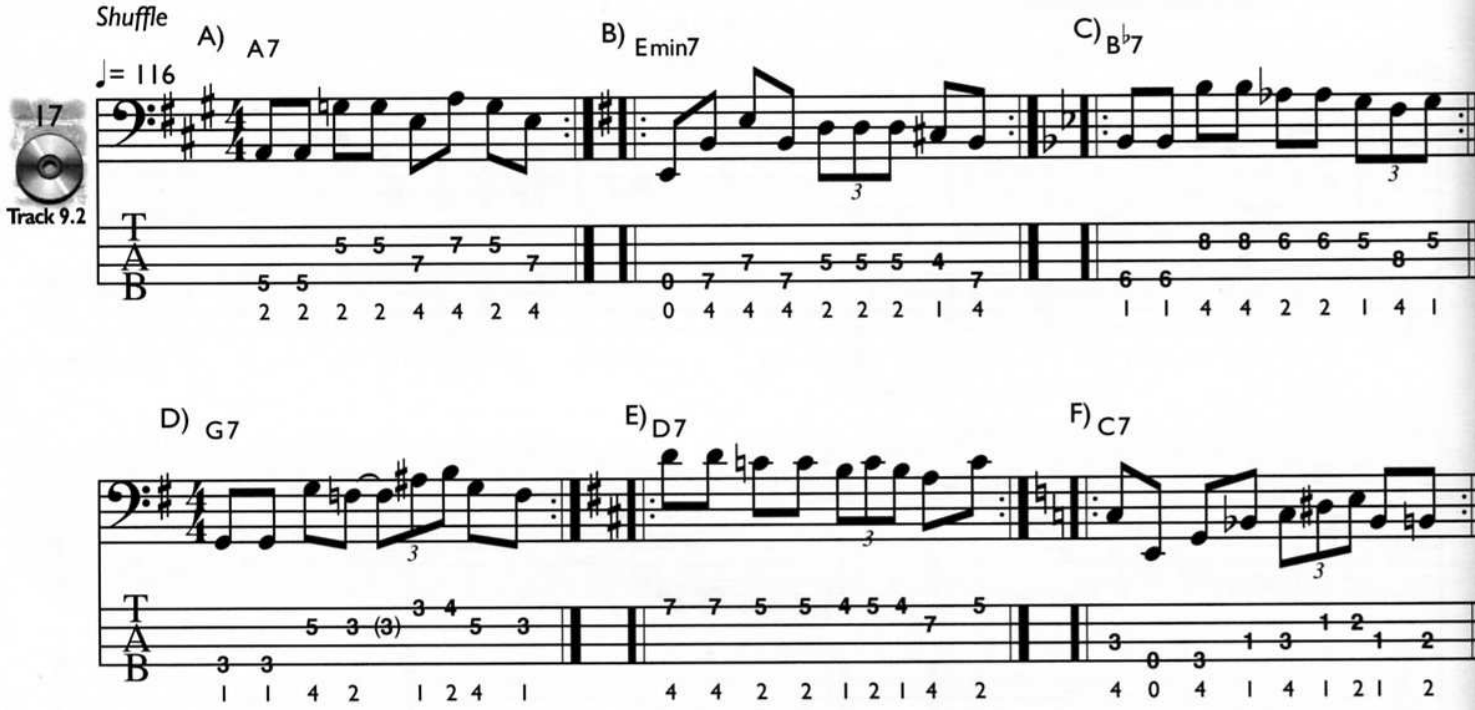
Advancements in recording technology and the movement from the acoustic bass to the electric bass gave bassists a more prominent role in all styles. Modern blues bassists incorporate funk, rock and jazz styles in their playing.

Here are some contemporary shuffle grooves for you to check out. Remember to use these in the appropriate situations with taste and musicality.

Two-bar patterns



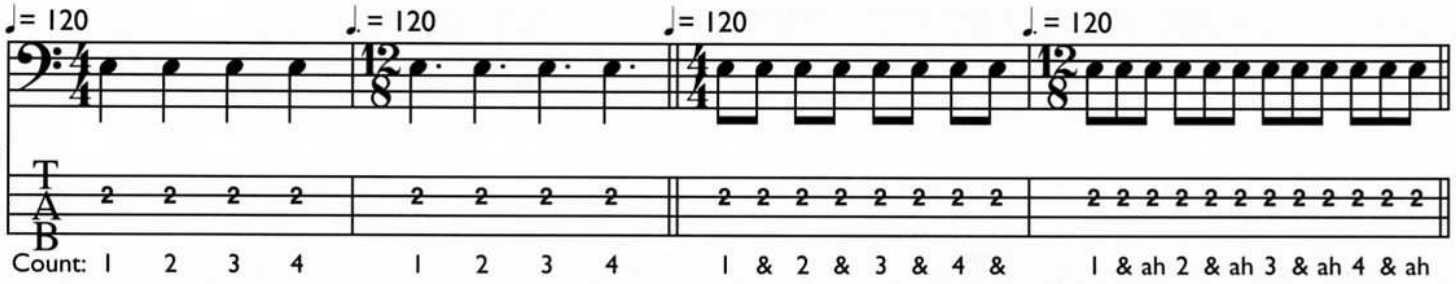
One-bar patterns



12/8 Grooves

Tunes written in $\frac{12}{8}$ represent another common blues feel. $\frac{12}{8}$ tunes still have four beats per measure but now the dotted quarter note ♩. takes the place of the quarter note, and the measure is divided by twelve eighth notes instead of eight eighth notes. Confused? The example below should help. The rhythms on the next few pages are going to be fairly complex. For this reason, take your time and pay attention to the subdivisions of each beat.

18
Track 10.1



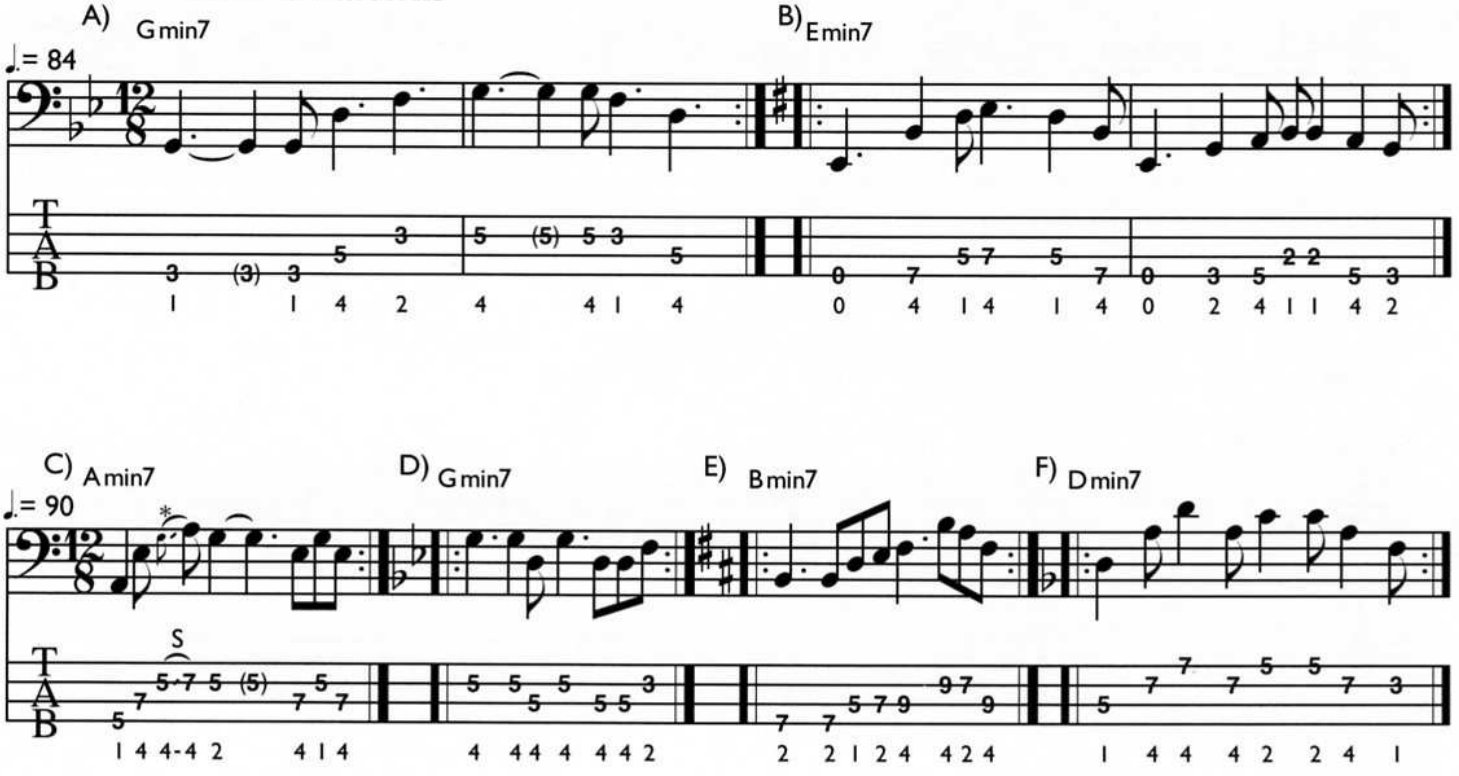
The $\frac{12}{8}$ groove is often used in minor-key ballads and medium tempo tunes. The patterns below will sound best played at a metronome setting of ♩. = 72-94. Make sure you lay back on these grooves and play the full value of all the notes.

Slides

In these patterns you will be introduced to the *grace note slide*. Grace notes are written smaller than regular notes. A slide is produced by playing the grace note and then immediately sliding to the next written note. The grace note can be played before the beat, so that you slide into the beat. It depends on the context. A slide is produced by sliding your fretting hand up or down the neck. Do not restrike the string with your plucking hand. Slides are common in many styles. Have fun with this technique but don't overuse it!

Two-Bar Patterns

19
Track 10.2

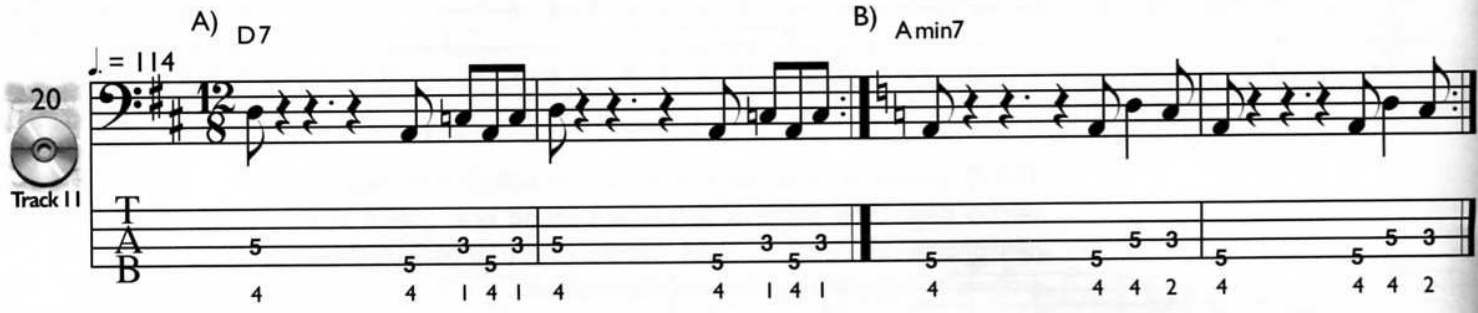


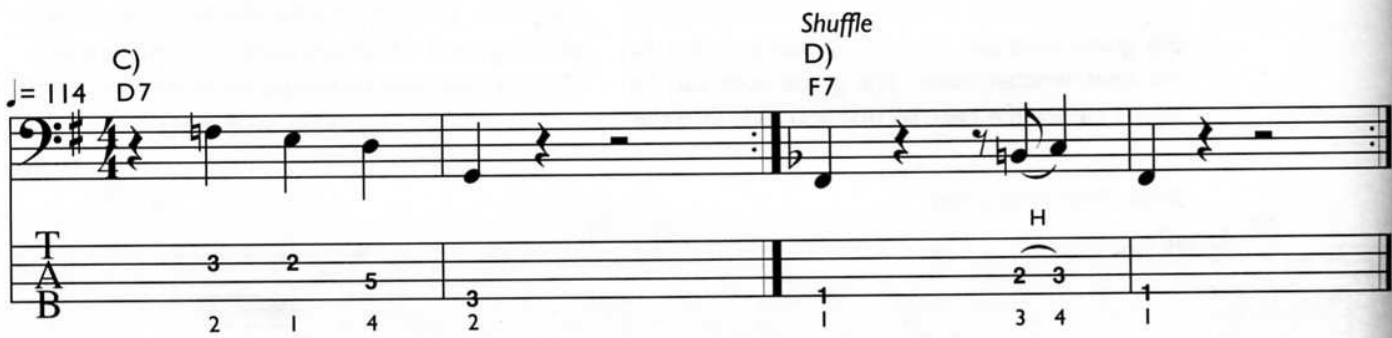
*Grace note slide

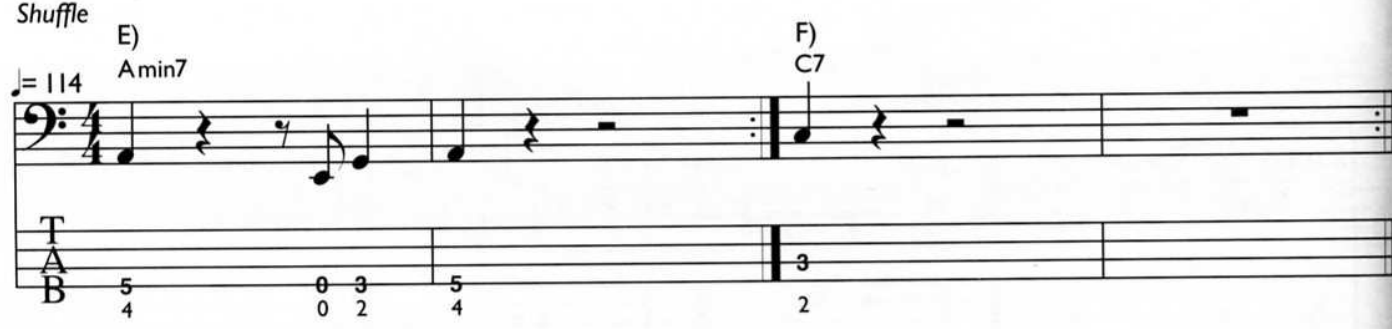
Breaks

No music is music too!

There is a lot of power and wisdom in these words. Music without pauses or *breaks* can become...well, boring. A break is a place in the tune where the entire band will stop at the same time. This is a very effective musical device often used in the blues. The space that is created is usually reserved for a vocal or instrumental fill, or nothing at all. This adds drama and anticipation to the music—it keeps your audience interested. Below are some commonly used blues breaks.

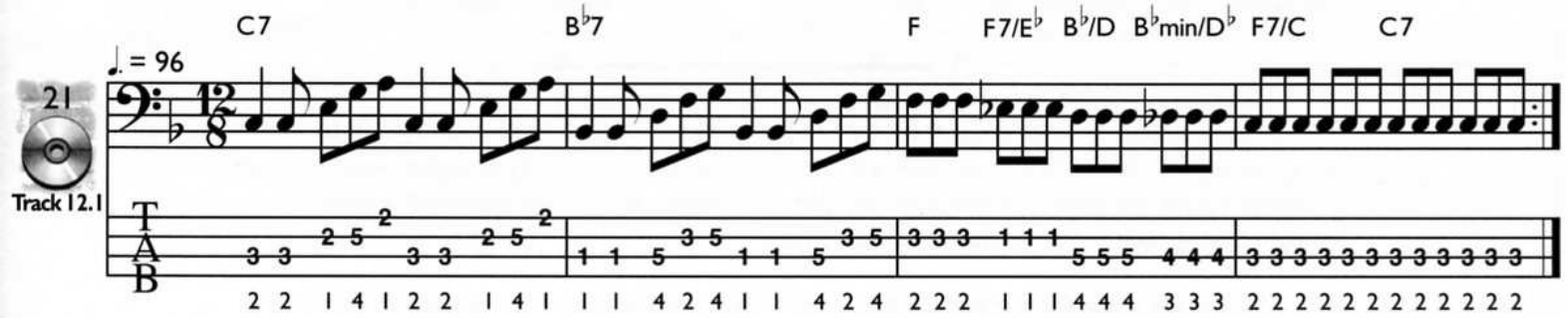


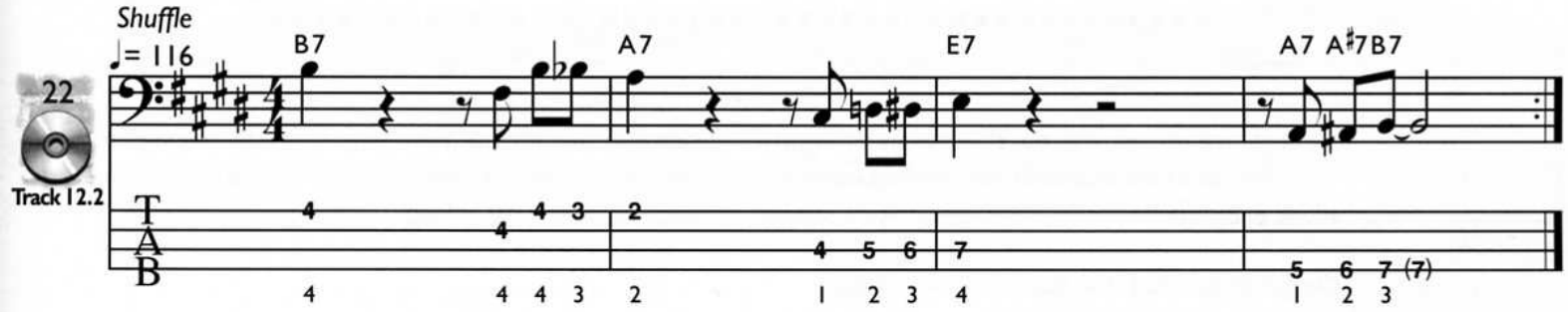


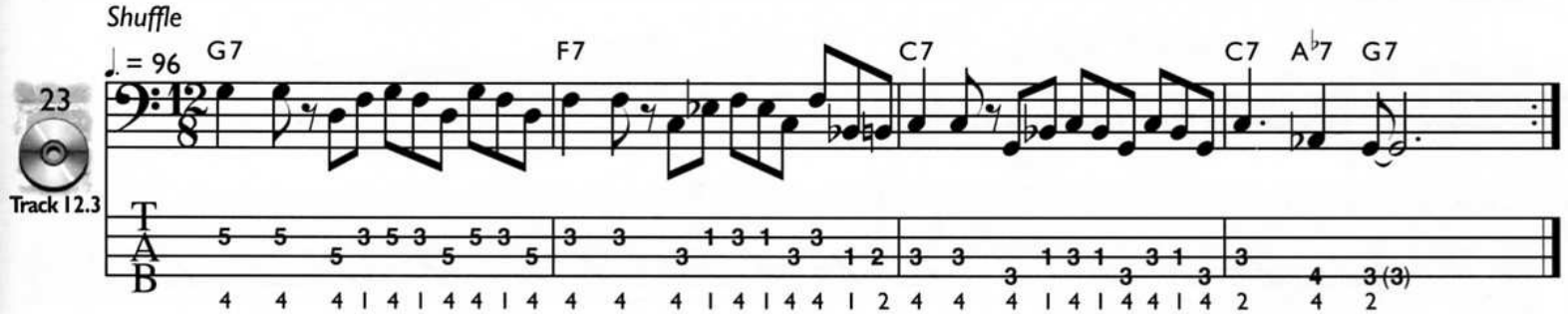


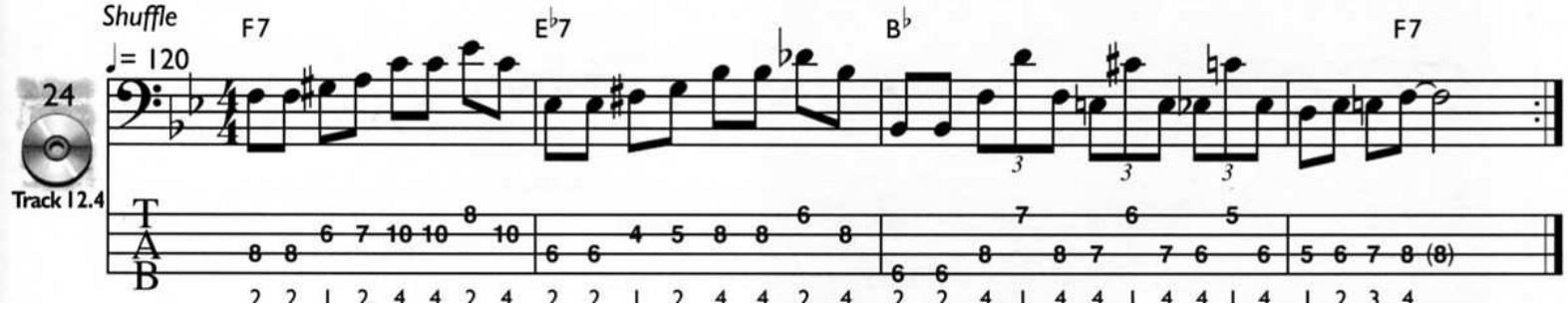
Turnarounds: The Sequel

Here are some turnarounds using shuffles, $\frac{12}{8}$ grooves, breaks and all the other cool stuff you've learned in this chapter.





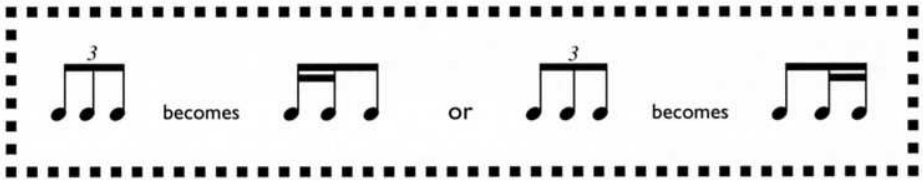




Straight-Eighth Grooves & Blues Variation

We've spent a lot of pages learning about shuffle grooves. While a large majority of blues tunes use these feels, there are many blues tunes that use a straight-eighth feel. *Born Under A Bad Sign*, *The Thrill Is Gone* and *Crossroads* are examples of straight-eighth groove tunes.

The straight-eighth groove gives the blues more of a rock/R&B feel. You can play all of the patterns found on pages 14 through 16 with a straight-eighth feel. If a pattern uses an eighth note triplet, simply change it to two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note or an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes:



Before we move on to the straight-eighth patterns, let's look at a variation on the twelve-bar blues progression we've been using. It's a simple variation but it's used in many blues tunes. All you do is replace the I chord in the second measure with a IV chord.

Original form: First four bars G Major

Variation: First four bars G Major

PHOTO CREDIT CHUCK PULIN / COURTESY OF STAR FILE,INC.

Tommy Shannon

Tommy Shannon (on the right) was the bass player with Double Trouble, which featured guitarist, Stevie Ray Vaughn. Their music became the benchmark that defined the Texas blues/rock style and influenced countless young blues musicians.

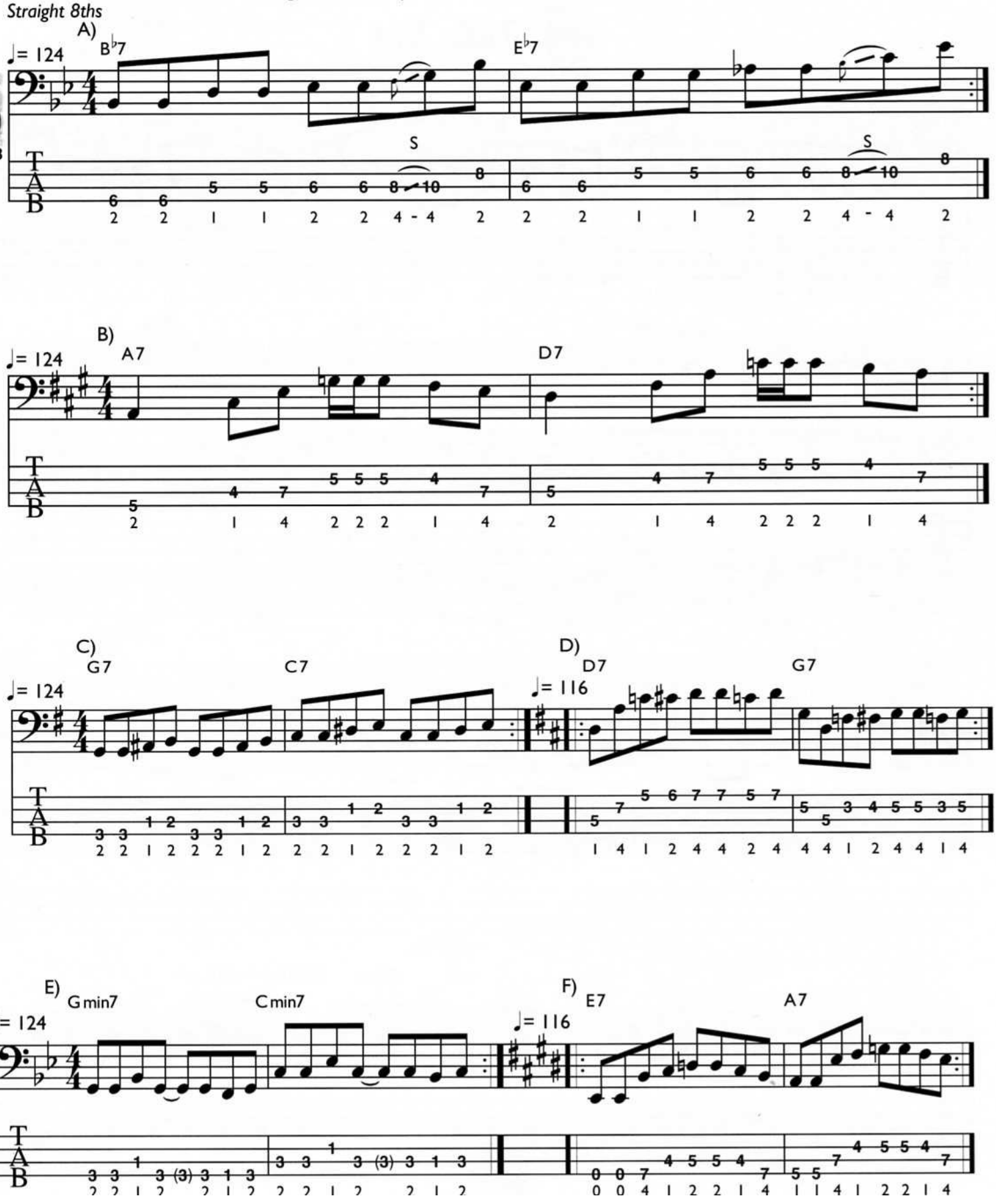
Straight-Eighth Examples

The following straight-eighth grooves will use the blues progression variation demonstrated on page 20. Memorize this variation and use it throughout this chapter.

Straight 8ths

27

Track 13

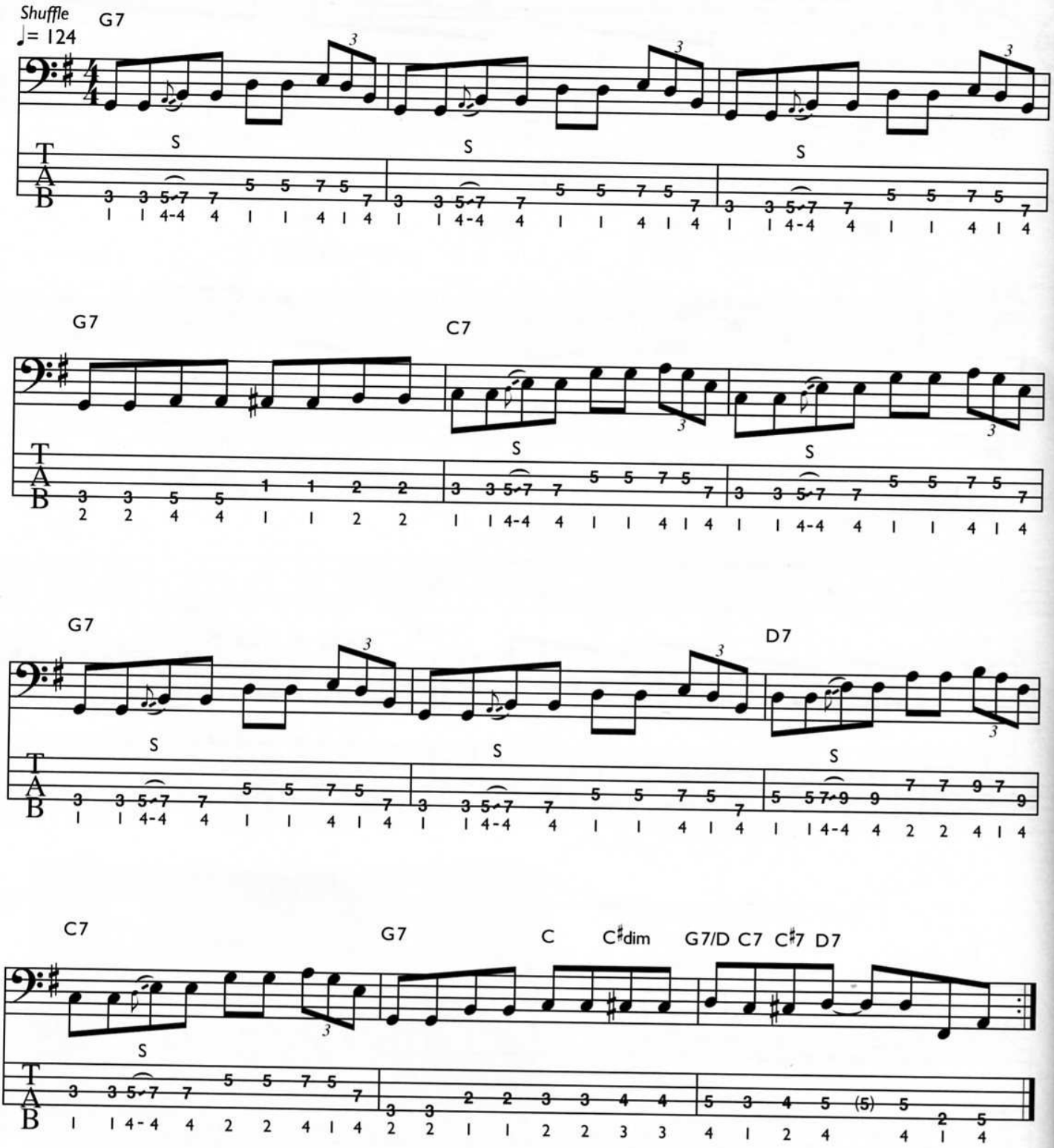


Tunes

Now it's time to put all of the information you've learned to good use and start building bass lines.

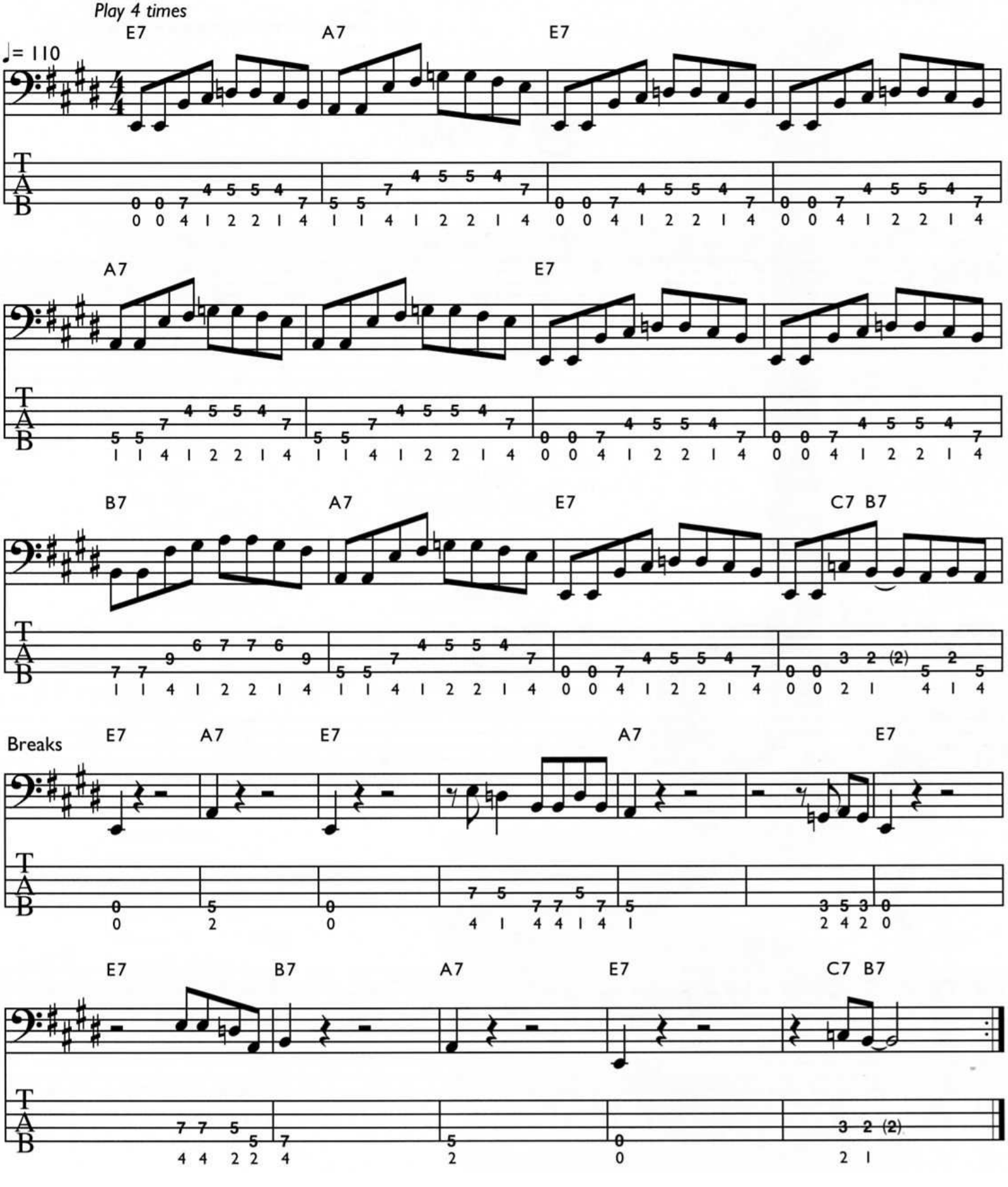
The first tune is a shuffle in G Major. Make it GROOVE!

Shuffle Tune

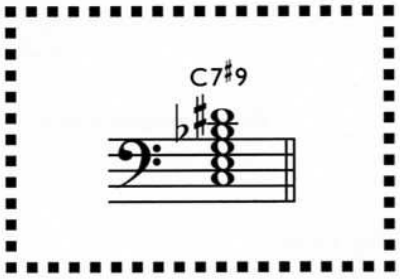


Straight-Eighths Tune

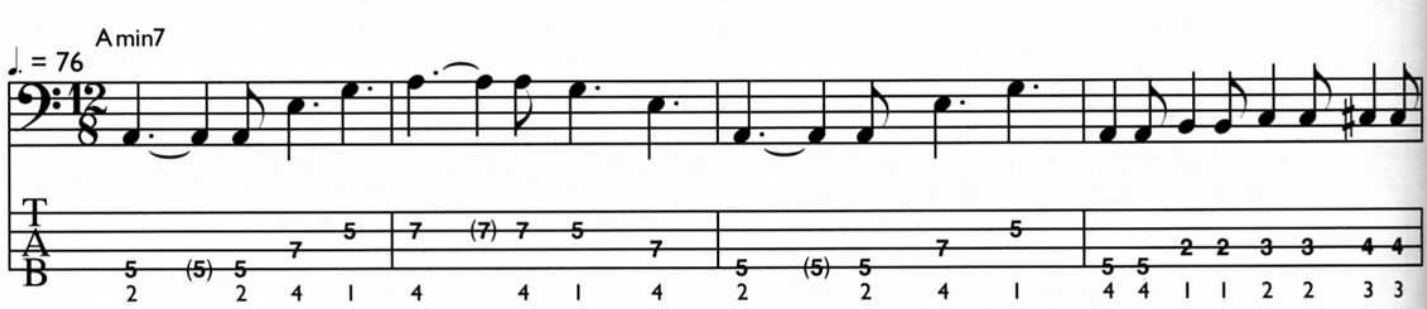
This tune uses the straight-eighth-note feel. Be aware of the breaks.

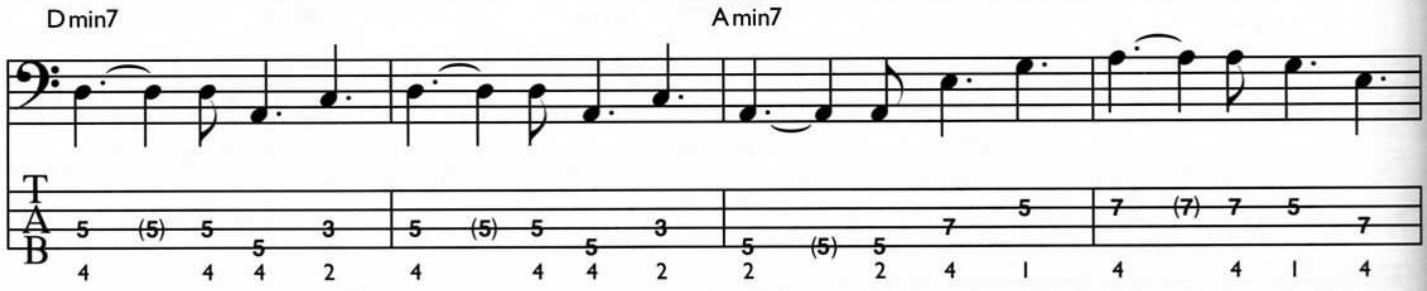


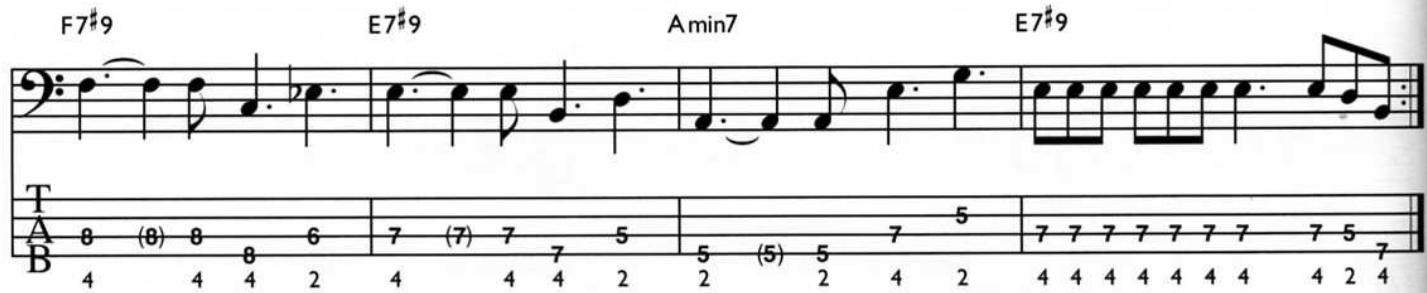
This tune uses a classic $\frac{12}{8}$ feel. Check out the $^{\sharp}9$ chords in measures nine, ten and twelve. You'll hear these chords quite often, so learn to recognize their sound. The 9th of the chord is simply raised one half step. See page 18 for a review of chord extensions.



$\frac{12}{8}$ *Ballad*







Blues Summary & Discography

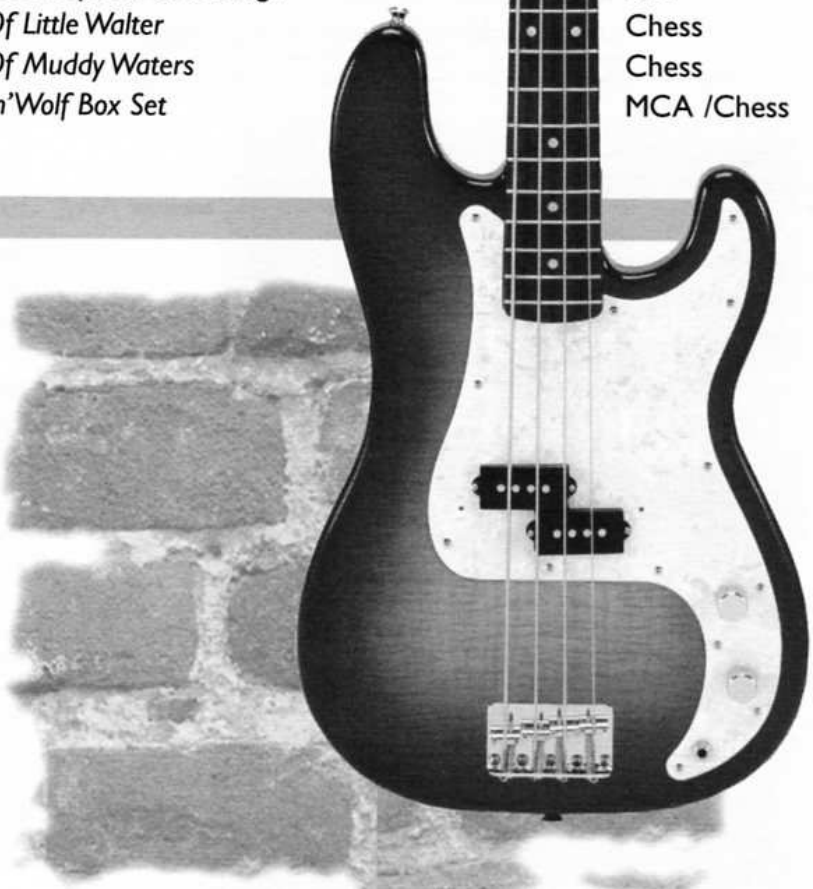
The blues is a style that is rooted firmly in rock, jazz, funk, etc. Using a simple twelve-bar form, there are limitless ways to approach playing the blues. The shuffle, $\frac{12}{8}$ and straight-eighth grooves are commonly used. Knowing the blues thoroughly is essential to the development of any musician creating bass lines: bass players, arrangers, composers—you name it. When in doubt, play the blues!

DISCOGRAPHY

Artist/Group	Recording	Label
Clarence Gatemouth Brown	*Pressure Cooker*	Alligator
Albert Collins	*The Complete Imperial Recordings*	EMI
Robert Cray	*Don't Be Afraid Of The Dark*	Mercury
Willie Dixon	*I Am The Blues Mobile*	Fidelity
Buddy Guy	*The Very Best*	Rhino
John Lee Hooker	*The Ultimate Collection*	Rhino
Albert King	*Masterworks*	Atlantic
B.B. King	*The Best Of B.B.*	Virgin
Jimmy Reed	*Best Of Jimmy Reed*	Vee-Jay
Otis Rush	*Paula*	Cobra
Son Seals	*Bad Axe*	Alligator
Koko Taylor	*What It Takes*	Chess
Stevie Ray Vaughn	*Texas Flood*	Columbia
T-Bone Walker	*Complete Imperial Recordings*	EMI
Little Walter	*Best Of Little Walter*	Chess
Muddy Waters	*Best Of Muddy Waters*	Chess
Howlin' Wolf	*Howlin'Wolf Box Set*	MCA /Chess

Bassists to check out:

Roscoe Beck
Willie Dixon
Tommy Shannon
Greg Rzab
Noel Neal
Johnny B. Gayden



Chapter 3

Rock

Rock music has gone through so many changes in its brief history that it's almost impossible to define. Artists ranging from Chuck Berry to Metallica are considered rock musicians. Get a bunch of musicians together and ask them to define rock music and they will probably all answer differently. One word you'll probably hear repeated in all the definitions however, is "attitude." Rock was built on attitude. You have to remember this when you are playing rock music. Some rock bass lines use only steady eighth notes with just the root and 5th of the chord. The conviction (attitude) of the bassist is what gives the line its character and validity, not the amount of notes. We will focus on three areas of rock bass lines: early, melodic and steady-eighth-notes and riffs style.

Early Styles

It is generally accepted that rock music began in the 1950s. Early rock bassists came from many different styles including blues, R&B, jazz, gospel and country. These styles heavily influenced early rock bass lines. The invention and widespread use of the electric bass also greatly influenced early rock styles. Like most music that originates from the United States, rock is a hybrid, or mixture, of many different styles. That is why it continues to evolve.

Melodic

Melodic bass playing became very popular in the 1960s and continues today. Because of advancements in recording technology and the volume of the electric bass, the bass line could finally be heard. In this style, the bass line has a much more interactive role and often the song revolves around the bass line. Early melodic bass innovators include Paul McCartney (Beatles), Jack Cassidy (Jefferson Airplane), Lee Sklar (James Taylor) and session players Joe Osborn (Carpenters, Mamas and the Papas) and Carole Kaye (Beach Boys).

Steady-Eighth-Notes and Riffs

Many rock bass lines are built using steady, root-based eighth notes and riffs. These are the foundation of many hard rock tunes from the 1970s to the present. Bassists that play in this style include Michael Anthony (Van Halen), Steve Harris (Iron Maiden), Tom Hamilton (Aerosmith) and Dusty Hill (ZZ Top).

PHOTO CREDIT CHUCK PULIN / COURTESY OF STAR FILE,INC.

Me'Shell Ndegéocello

is a brilliant bassist
who recorded
in the 1990s
with John Mellencamp
on his ***Wild Night*** *single*
and with the Rolling Stones
on the ***Bridges to Babylon*** *album.*
She has recorded
several highly acclaimed
solo albums as well.

Early Rock Styles

Many early rock tunes were based on the blues progression. Bassists on these early recordings used the tried and true 1, 3, 5, 6, ♭7 shuffle and walking bass patterns that you learned in the last chapter.

A lot of these early tunes were not much different than the popular shuffles or boogie-woogie tunes of the 1930s and '40s. In fact, this music wasn't even labeled rock'n'roll until the mid-'50s.

Rock started to get its own identity when:

1. It got away from the blues progression and started using different chord progressions.
2. Swing eighths were replaced by straight eighths.
3. Drummers started getting more inventive with their patterns.

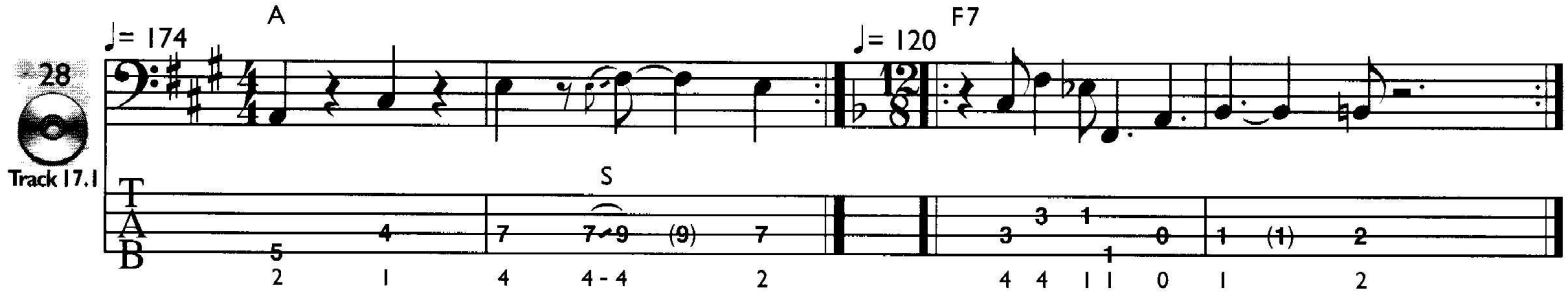
All of these changes in the music obviously had an affect on the bass lines. Here are changes that began to appear in the bass:

1. Syncopated lines. Syncopation is a rhythmic device that shifts accents or emphasis on to the weak beats or weak parts of the beat.
2. The use of slides, muted notes, detached notes. These are all different examples of articulation.
3. Higher pitched notes used more often.

These changes didn't happen overnight, but came about through the ideas and creativity of many bassists and composers. Below are some of the most common lines from the early rock era. Listen to how different they sound from the early blues patterns of the last chapter.

Two-Bar Patterns

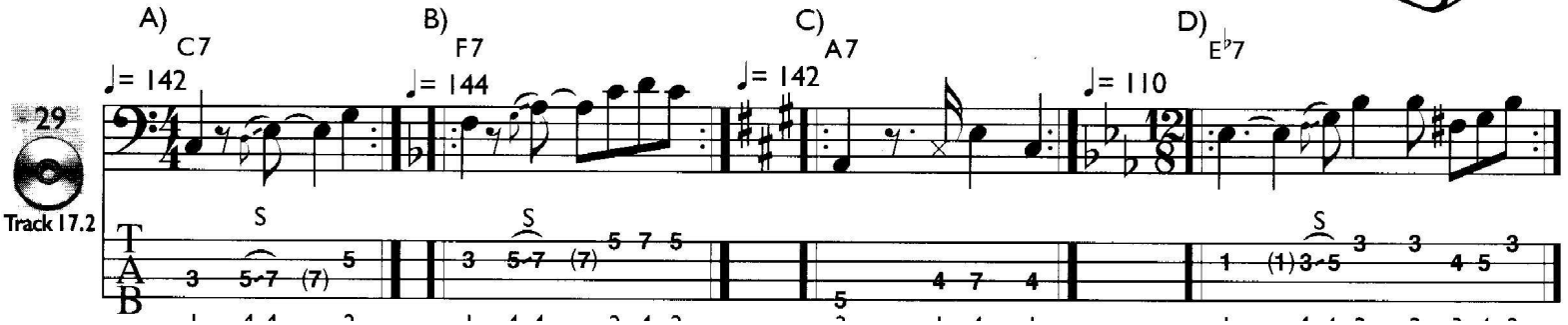
28
Track 17.1



NOTE PAD:
× = Mute.
Touch the note lightly with the left hand while plucking with the right to create a percussive effect.

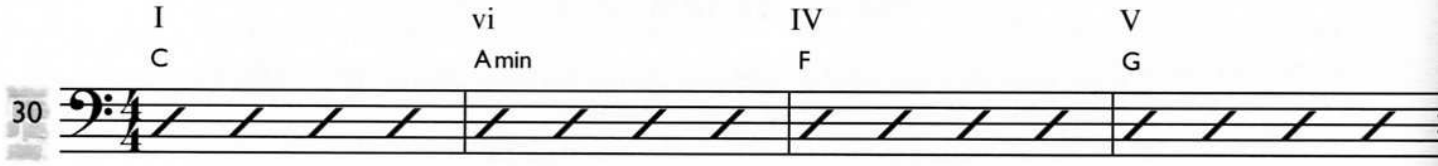
One-bar Patterns

29
Track 17.2



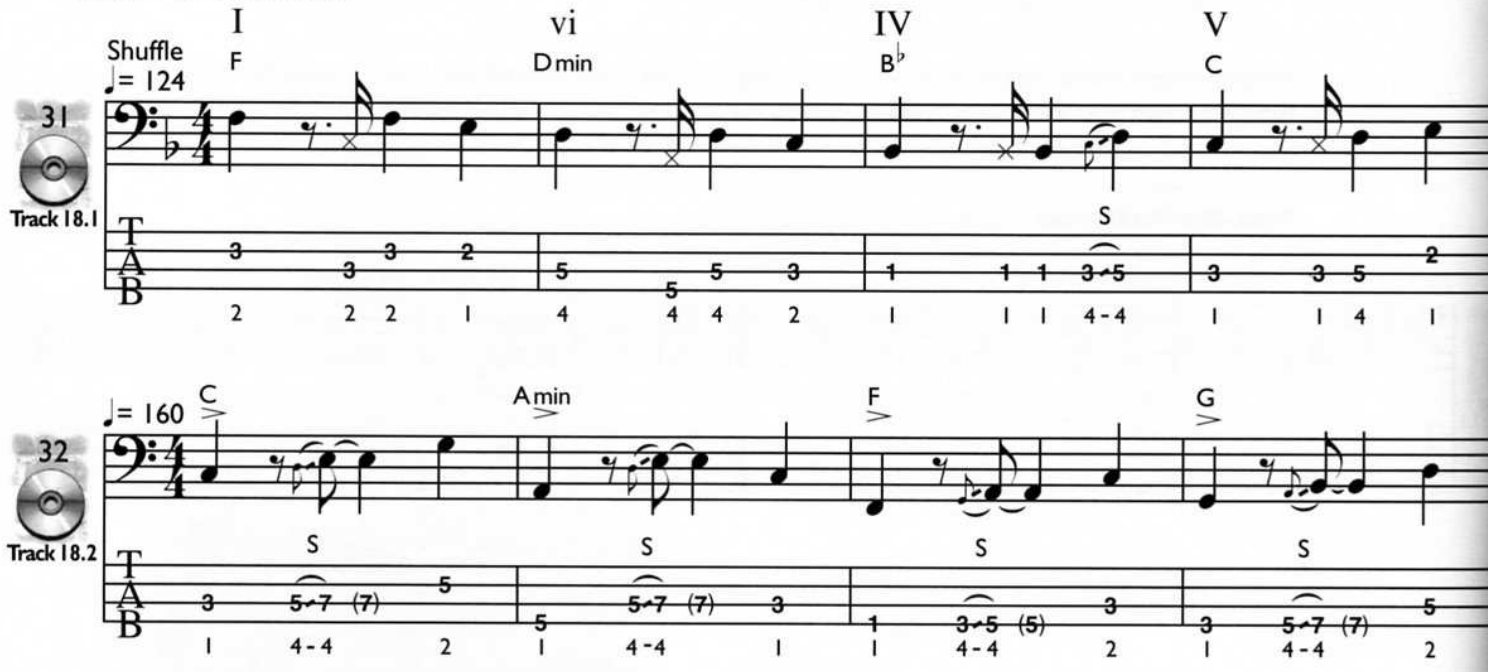
The I, vi, IV, V Chord Progression

One of the most frequently used chord progressions used during the early rock era, other than the blues, was the I, vi, IV, V progression. Some tunes that use this progression are *Teenager In Love* by Dion and The Belmonts, *Sh-Boom* by the Chords and *Every Breath You Take*, a huge hit for The Police in the mid-1980s. Here's what the progression looks like in standard chord notation:

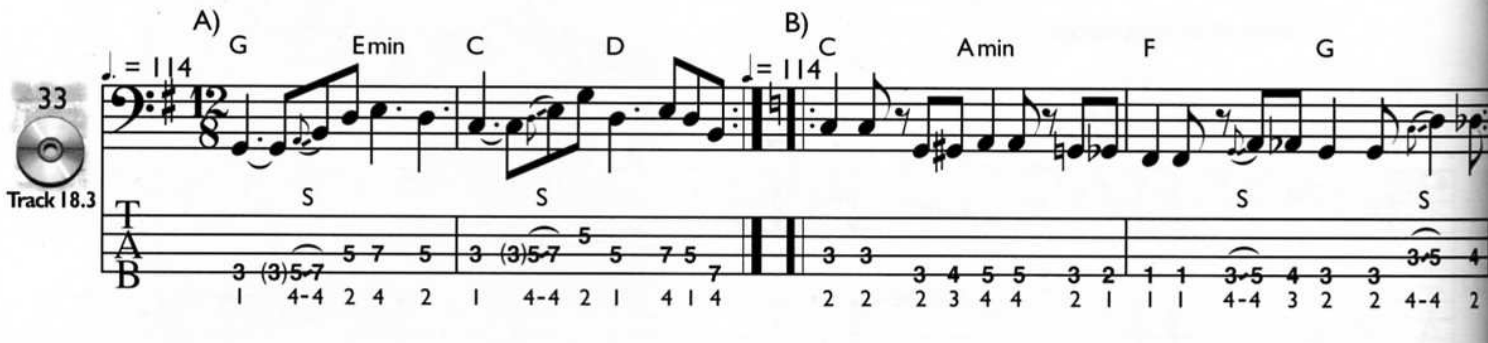


Notice that all the chords are major except for the vi chord, which is minor. If your bass line for this progression outlines the chords, make sure the vi chord has a minor quality (a ♭3). Also, keep the transitions smooth from chord to chord by using step-wise or diatonic movement. Below are some typical I, vi, IV, V progressions.

Four-Bar Patterns



Two Bar Patterns



Melodic Bass

During the 1960s, rock musicians started using more complex chords, progressions and song forms. There was also a lot of experimentation going on as musicians utilized all the possibilities of the recording studio. This is when the melodic bass style began to take shape. The overall sound and abilities of bassists greatly improved during this period, which allowed the bass a much more prominent role in the music. Bass lines no longer centered on one- or two-bar repetitive patterns, but continually evolved throughout the song.

Before you get started building bass lines in this style, remember:

In the melodic style, the bass still functions in a supportive role!

Don't confuse melodic playing with soloing. They are two different things. Even though your bass lines are "busier" than in previous styles, they still have to GROOVE!

Here are some general characteristics and techniques of this style:

1. Varied use of rhythm—sixteenths, eighths, syncopation.
2. Varied use of diatonic and chromatic passing tones. Passing tones are tones that we pass through on our way between chord tones. Diatonic passing tones are tones that belong in the key. Chromatic passing tones are tones not found in the key.
3. Non-repetitive lines.
4. Varied use of slides and upper register playing.
5. Varied use of 3rds, 5ths and 7ths, not always root based.

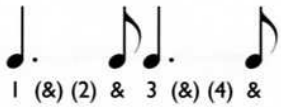
These are just some basic ideas for you to examine in this style. Turn the page and start creating some melodic lines!

Paul McCartney

played the bass with The Beatles in the 1960s, his solo group, Wings, in the 1970s and other solo projects in the 80s and 90s. His fluid bass style and flawless musicianship continues to influence nearly all contemporary bass players.

PHOTO CREDIT AL PEREIRA/COURTESY OF STAR FILE,INC.

Throughout these examples you will see this rhythm:

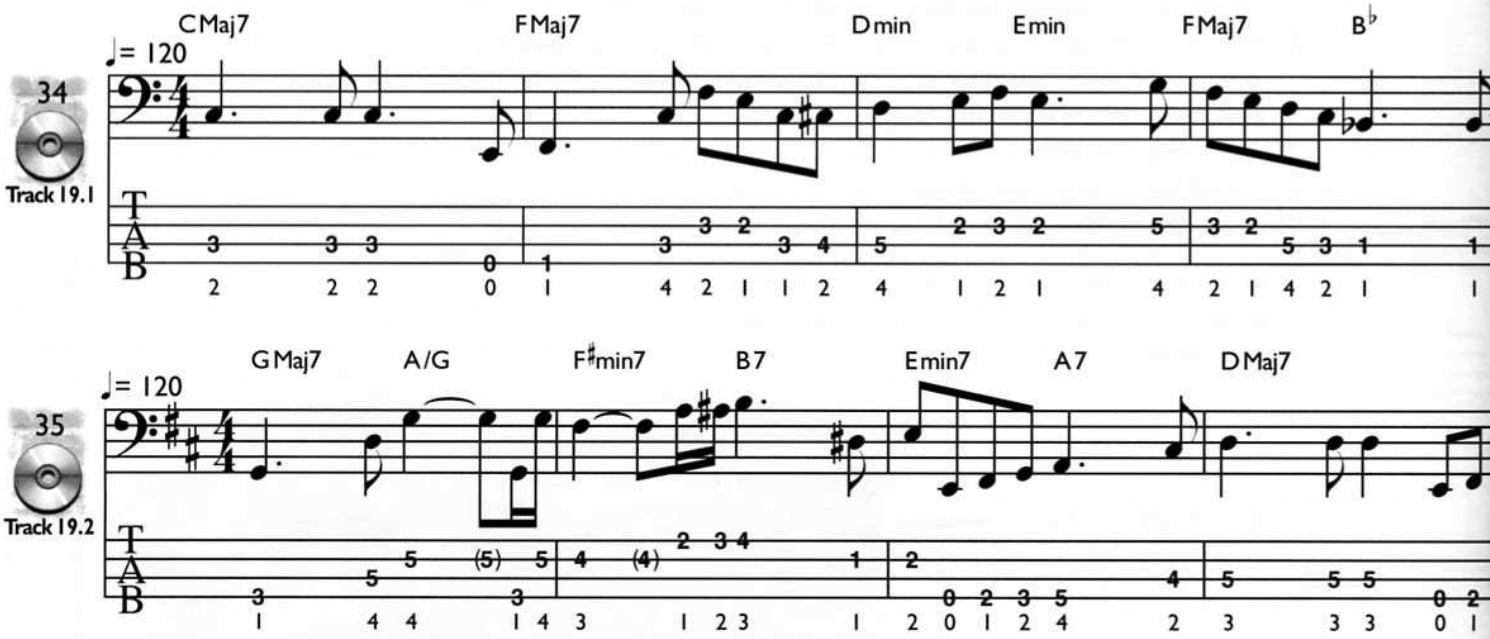


This is one of the most common rhythms in rock music, as well as many other styles. Get used to recognizing this pattern and use it with different articulations.

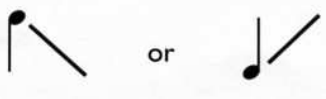
In these examples, you will also see chords written like this: **A/G** **F/A** **B♭/C**

These are often called slash chords. In a slash chord, the bass plays a note other than the root. What a concept! These chords are quite common in many styles so watch out for them!

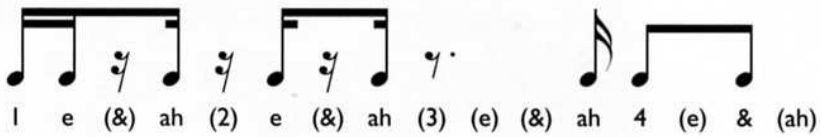
The following patterns should be played with a straight-eighth-note feel.



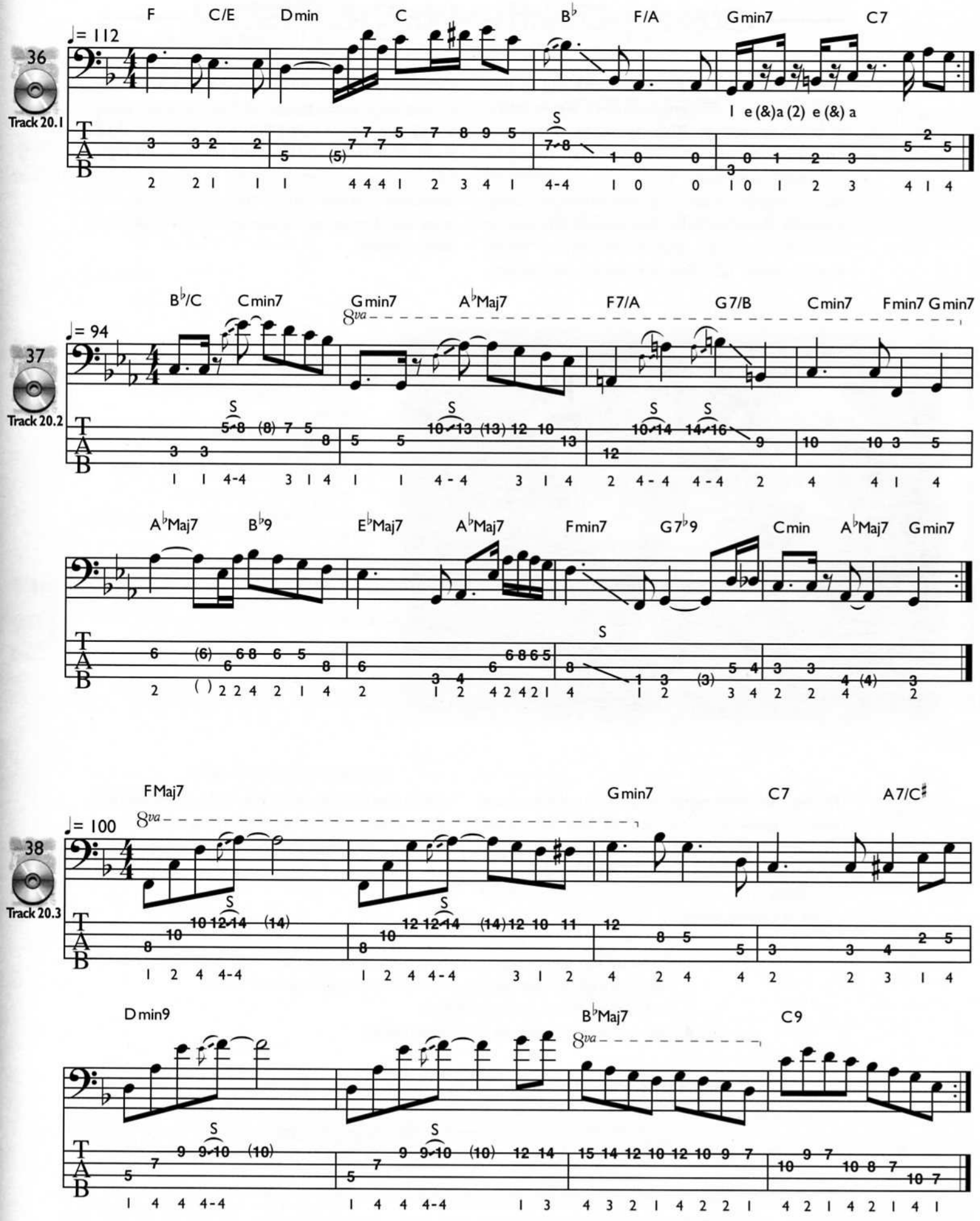
On the next page, you will be introduced to the glissando and a new rhythm. A *glissando* (also called a *gliss*) is produced by attacking a note and sliding your fretting hand either up or down the neck. A gliss is written like this:



The new rhythm you will encounter on the next page should be counted like this:



Practice this rhythm slowly, clapping and counting and then plucking open strings and counting. When you can play it accurately, and only then, increase the tempo.


F C/E Dmin C B♭ F/A Gmin7 C7
♩= 112
36
Track 20.1
1 e (&)a (2) e (&) a
B♭/C Cmin7 Gmin7 A♭Maj7 F7/A G7/B Cmin7 Fmin7 Gmin7
8va
♩= 94
37
Track 20.2
A♭Maj7 B♭9 E♭Maj7 A♭Maj7 Fmin7 G7♭9 Cmin A♭Maj7 Gmin7
FMaj7 Gmin7 C7 A7/C♯
8va
♩= 100
38
Track 20.3
Dmin9 B♭Maj7 C9
8va

Steady-Eighth-Note & Riff Style

The bass lines we're going to check out in this section are very different from the melodic styles of the last section. This is driving, "meat and potatoes," or for you vegetarians, "tofu and potatoes," style bass. These lines are based on steady eighth notes in every measure, using primarily roots and 5ths. This kind of bass playing is usually associated with "hard-rock" or "heavy metal" music (ZZ Top, Van Halen, Aerosmith, Metallica, etc). Because the guitar is so prominent in these styles, the bass generally plays a very supportive role (with exceptions to Billy Sheehan of The David Lee Roth Band and Mr. Big). *Riffs* are also used in this style. A riff is a short, repetitive pattern that is often doubled by the guitarist. (for example, *Smoke On The Water* by Deep Purple).

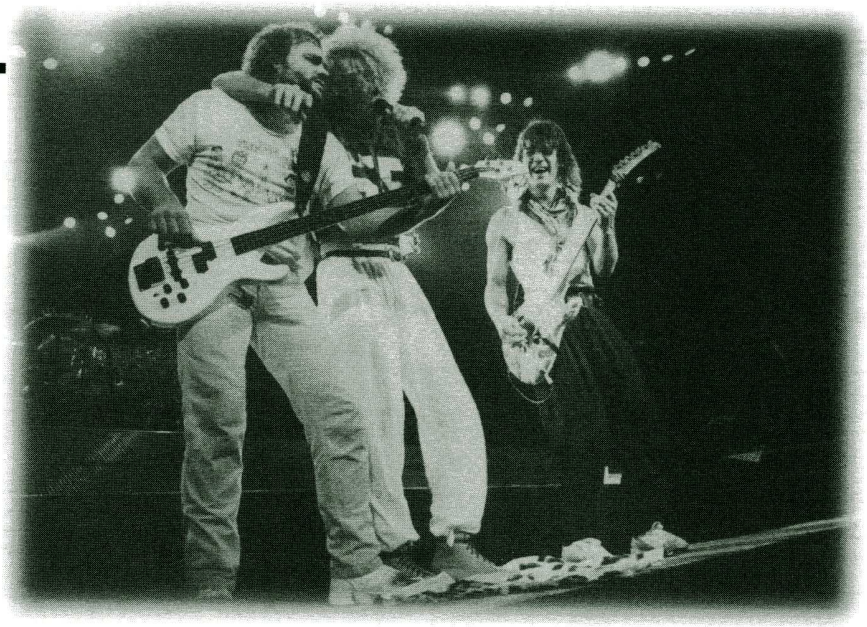


PHOTO CREDIT CHUCK PULIN / COURTESY OF STAR FILE,INC.

Michael Anthony
started playing bass in the 1970s with California rock group, Van Halen. They are one of the most popular rock groups in the world. He is shown here with ex-singer, Sammy Haggar and guitarist, Eddie Van Halen.

Playing consistent eighth notes with solid time and groove takes a lot of stamina and musicality. Remember, the bass line serves the tune. Even within the limitations of this style, there are lots of variations you can use with your bass lines to support and propel the music.

Here are some ideas:

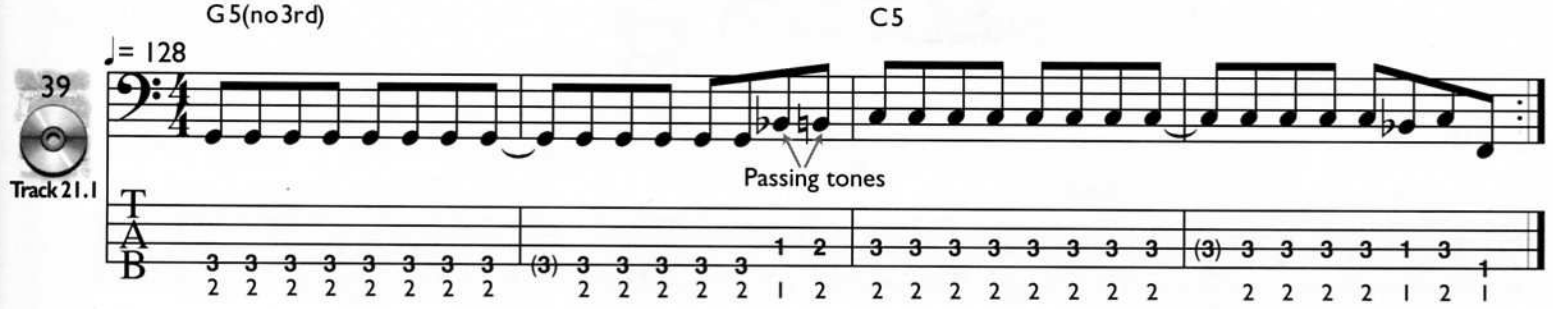
1. Break up the steady eighth pattern with rests and ties.
2. Vary the eighth-note pattern with sixteenths and quarter notes.
3. Use passing tones (not too many).
4. Use octaves to break up the eighth notes.

In this style, you will often see chords written like this: "E5" or "A5," etc. These are chords that contain only the root and 5th and no 3rd; therefore, these chords do not sound either major or minor.

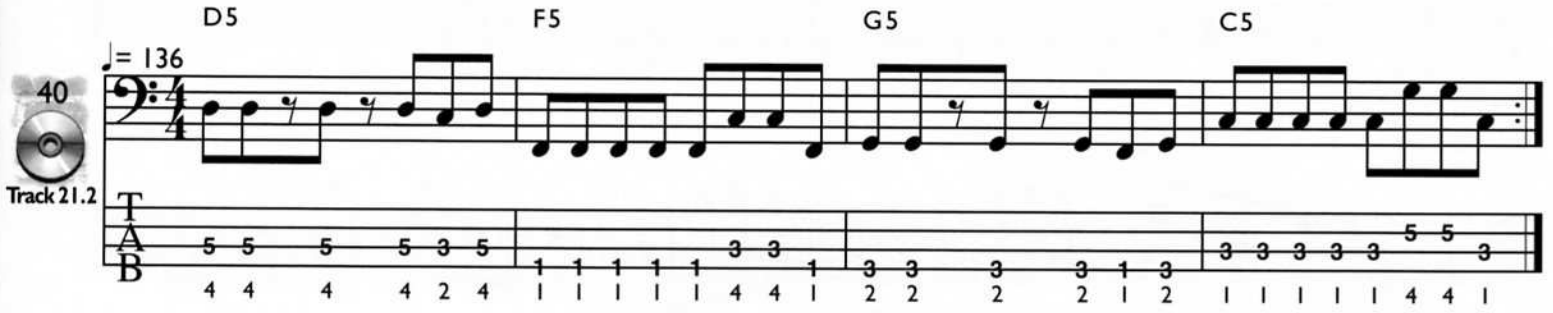
The following examples will utilize all the ideas mentioned above. Start rockin'!

Four-Bar Patterns

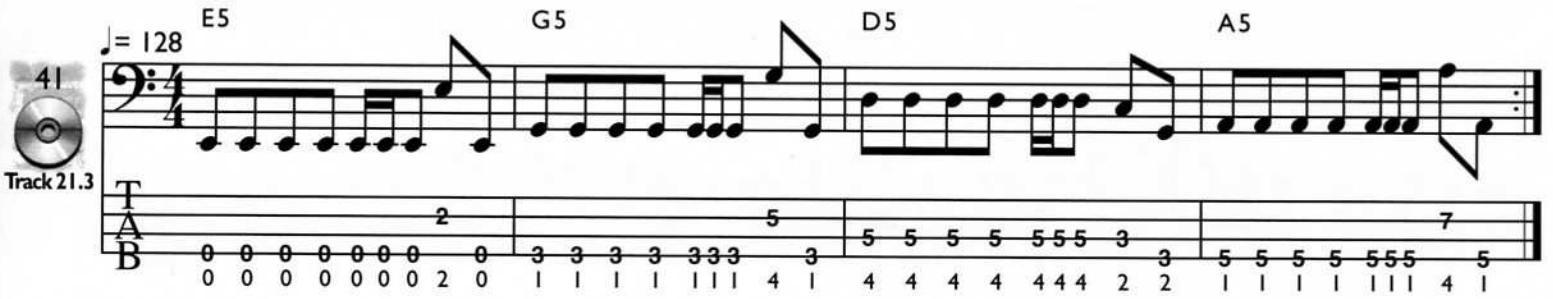
Using ties and passing tones.



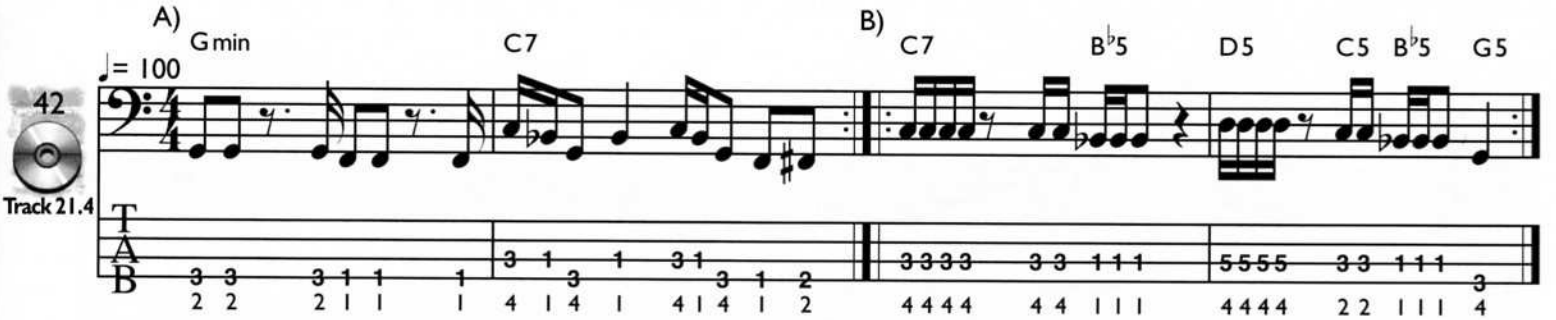
Using rests.

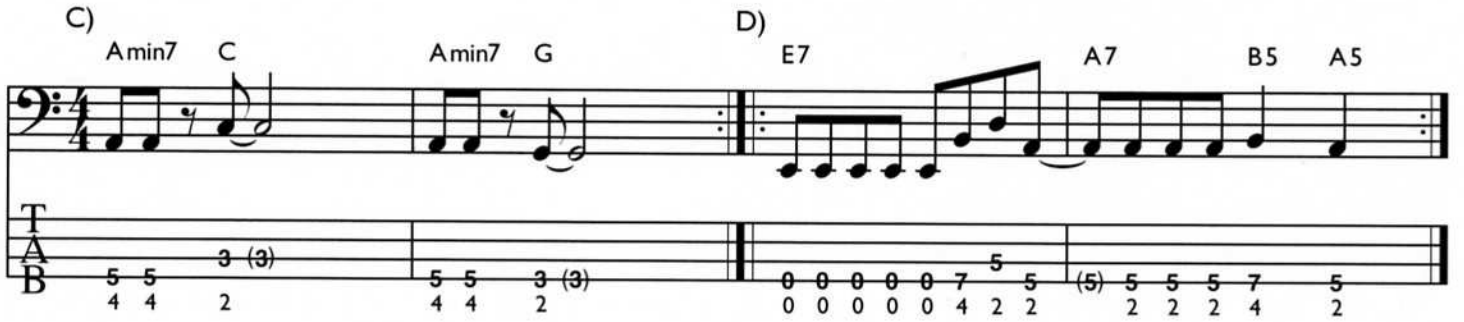


Adding sixteenth notes.



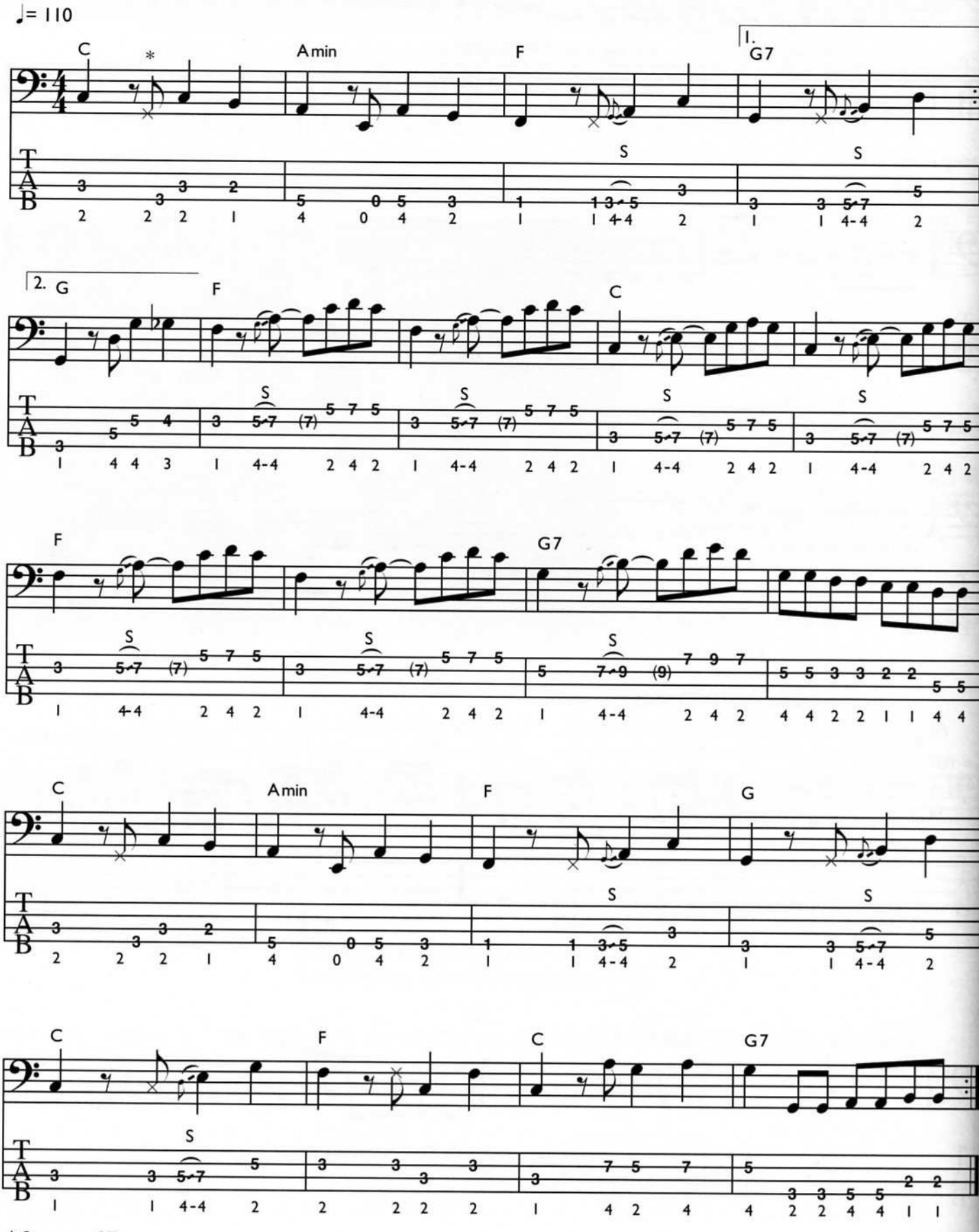
Two-Bar Riff Patterns





Early Rock Tune

Track 22

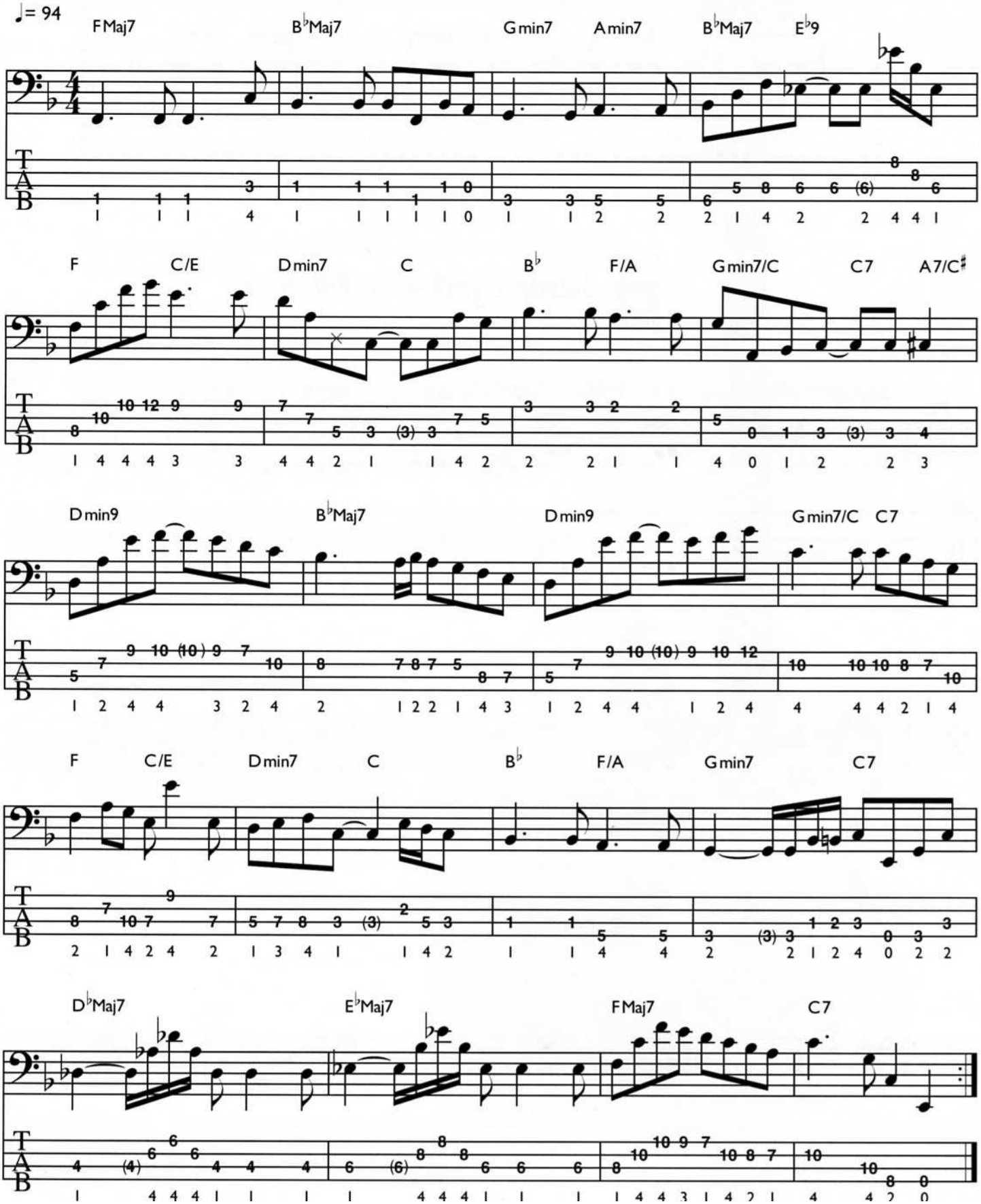


* See page 27

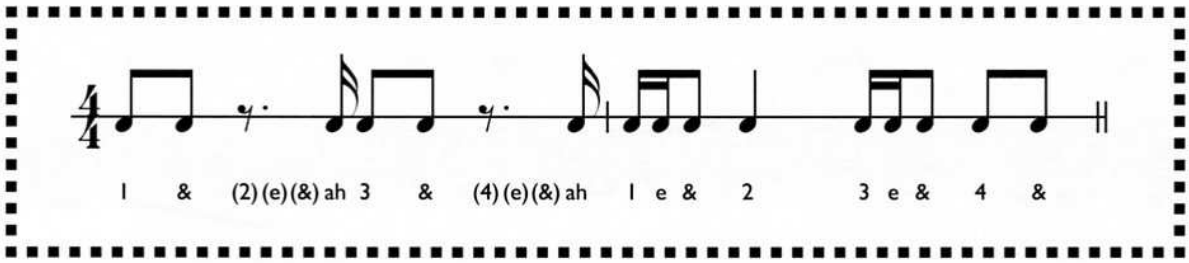
In this next tune, notice the Maj7 and min9 chords. They add color and richness to the harmonies. You can review chord formulas on page 18.

Track 23

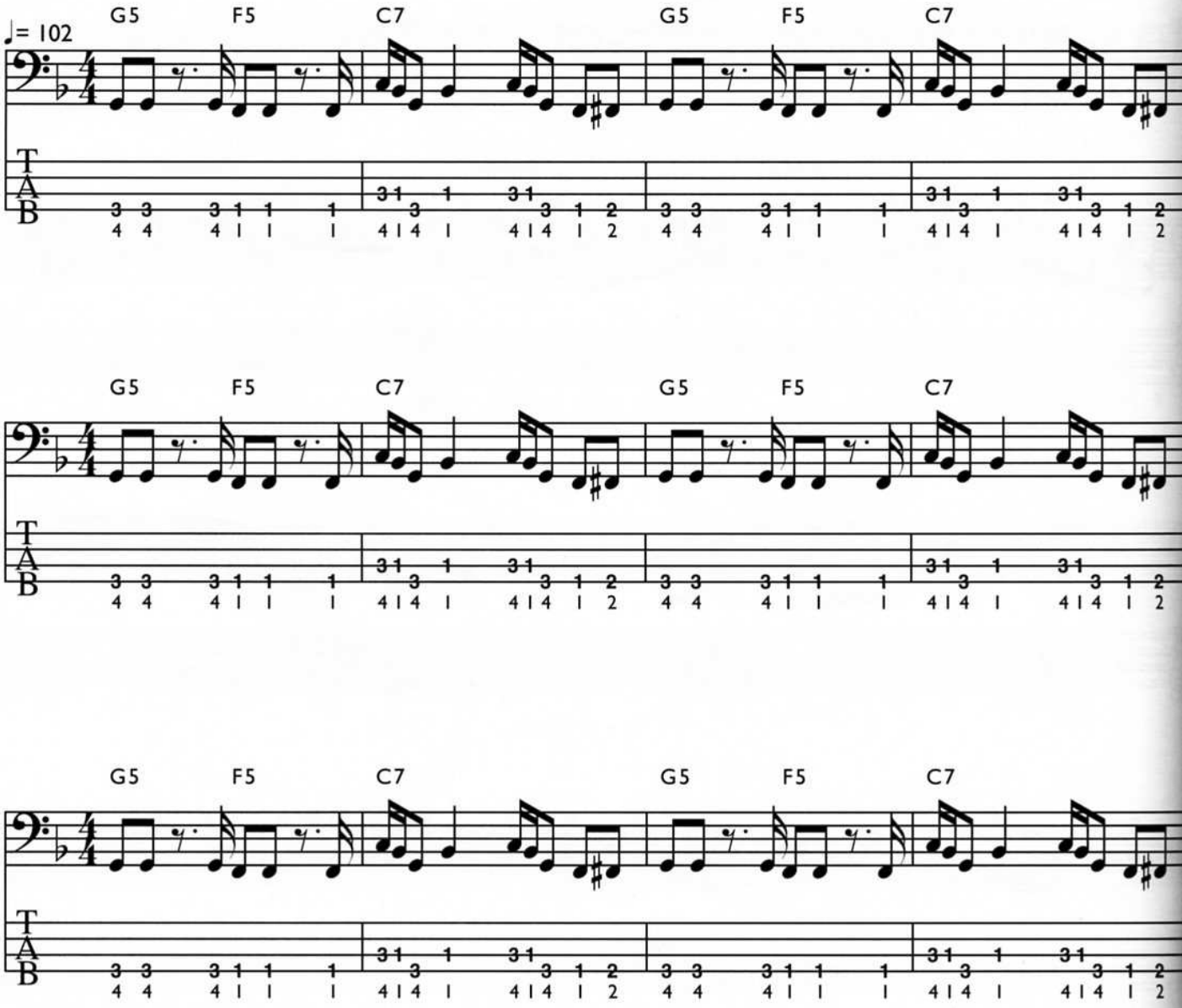
Melodic Bass Tune



While this tune has mostly a steady-eighth rhythm, it starts with a funky, syncopated two-bar riff that is repeated. Learn the rhythm before trying the tune. Here's how you count it:



Steady-Eighth-Note/Riff Tune



Rock Discography

Early Rock

Artist/Group	Recording	Label
Chuck Berry	*Chuck Berry The Great Twenty Eight*	Chess
Fats Domino	*Fats Domino's Greatest Hits*	MCA
Elvis Presley	*Elvis Golden Records*	RCA
Little Richard	*Little Richard's Grooviest Original Hits*	Specialty
Various Artists	*Atlantic Rhythm And Blues 1947-1974*	Atlantic
Various Artists	*Phil Spector Back To Mono*	AKO
Various Artists	*The Rock And Roll Era 1954-1965*	Time-Life Music

Bassists from this era include: Bill Black, Lloyd Trotman, Robert Parker and Wendell Marshall.

Melodic Rock

Artist/Group	Recording	Label	Bassist
The Beach Boys	*The Rock and Roll Era, The Beach Boys*	Time-Life Music	Carole Kaye
The Beatles	*Any album from Rubber Soul on.*	Apple	Paul McCartney
James Taylor	*JT*	Warner Brothers	Lee Sklar
The Carpenters	*Greatest Hits*	A&M	Joe Osborn
Jefferson Airplane	*The Jefferson Airplane Loves You*	RCA	Jack Cassady
Paul Young	*Between Two Fires*	Columbia	Pino Palladino
Joni Mitchell	*Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*	Elektra	Jaco Pastorius

Eighth Note/Riff Style

Any album by the following groups:

Group	Bassist
Van Halen	Michael Anthony
Kiss	Gene Simmons
ZZ Top	Dusty Hill
Iron Maiden	Steve Harris
Aerosmith	Tom Hamilton
AC/DC	Cliff Williams

Chapter 4

Jazz

Jazz has had an influence on almost all musical styles of this century. The origin of the rhythm section (bass, keyboards, guitar and drums) and their specific roles comes from jazz. Walking bass and the concept of groove between the bassist and the drummer, are also jazz innovations. Jazz music has so many different styles and categories, it's almost impossible to define.

Here's a list of some general characteristics that are frequently found in jazz:

1. **Improvisation**
2. **Swing eighths**
3. **Complex harmony**
4. **More chord changes**
5. **Faster tempos**
6. **Mainly instrumental**
7. **Frequent change of key or tonal areas**

All of these characteristics have definitely had an affect on the bass line. A lot of innovations in the "bass world" have come from jazz, including walking bass and bass as a soloing instrument. Because this book is about building bass lines, we'll focus on jazz walking bass and save soloing for another book. As you have learned in the last two chapters, walking bass is the foundation for bass lines in many different styles. This is also true in jazz.

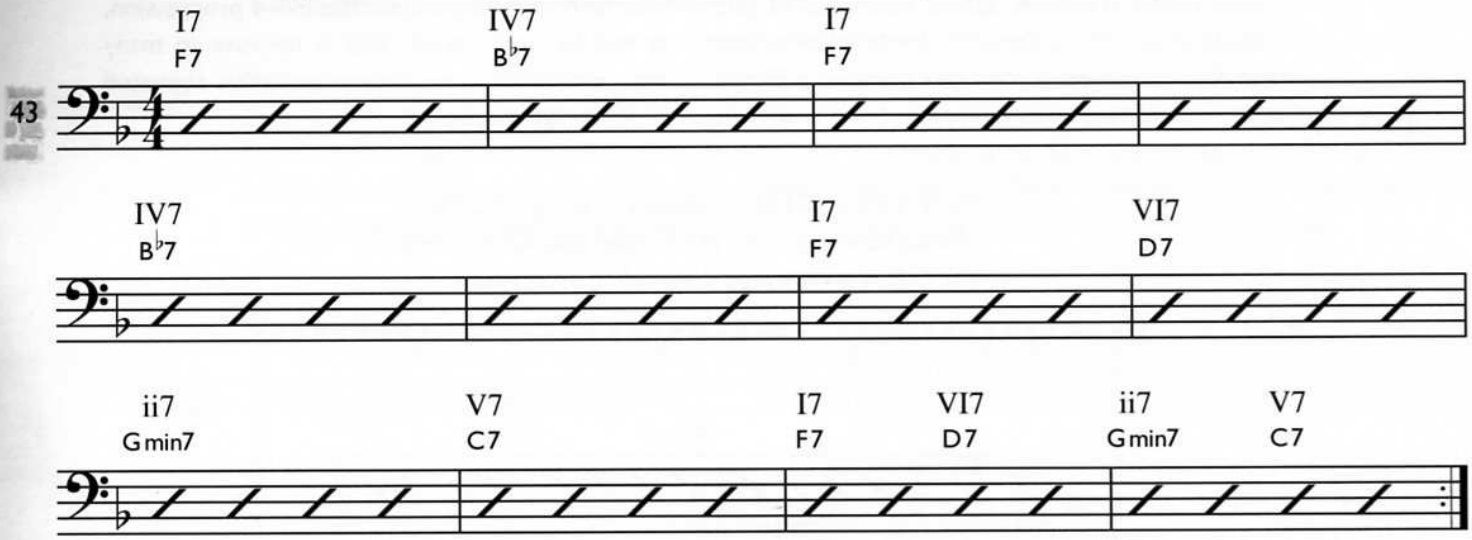
Here are some general characteristics that jazz bassists frequently use to create walking lines:

1. **Use of many non-chord tones, also called chromaticism**
2. **Rhythmic variation**
3. **Entire range of the bass used**
4. **Double stops (playing two notes at the same time)**
5. ***Legato*** quarter notes**
6. **Swing eighth notes**
7. **Non-repetitive, improvised**
8. **Muted notes**

* In jazz, walking bass lines are often played in the legato style. In this style, notes are played smoothly and evenly. Walking bass lines in other styles (rock and blues, for example) are usually played a little more detached or separated.

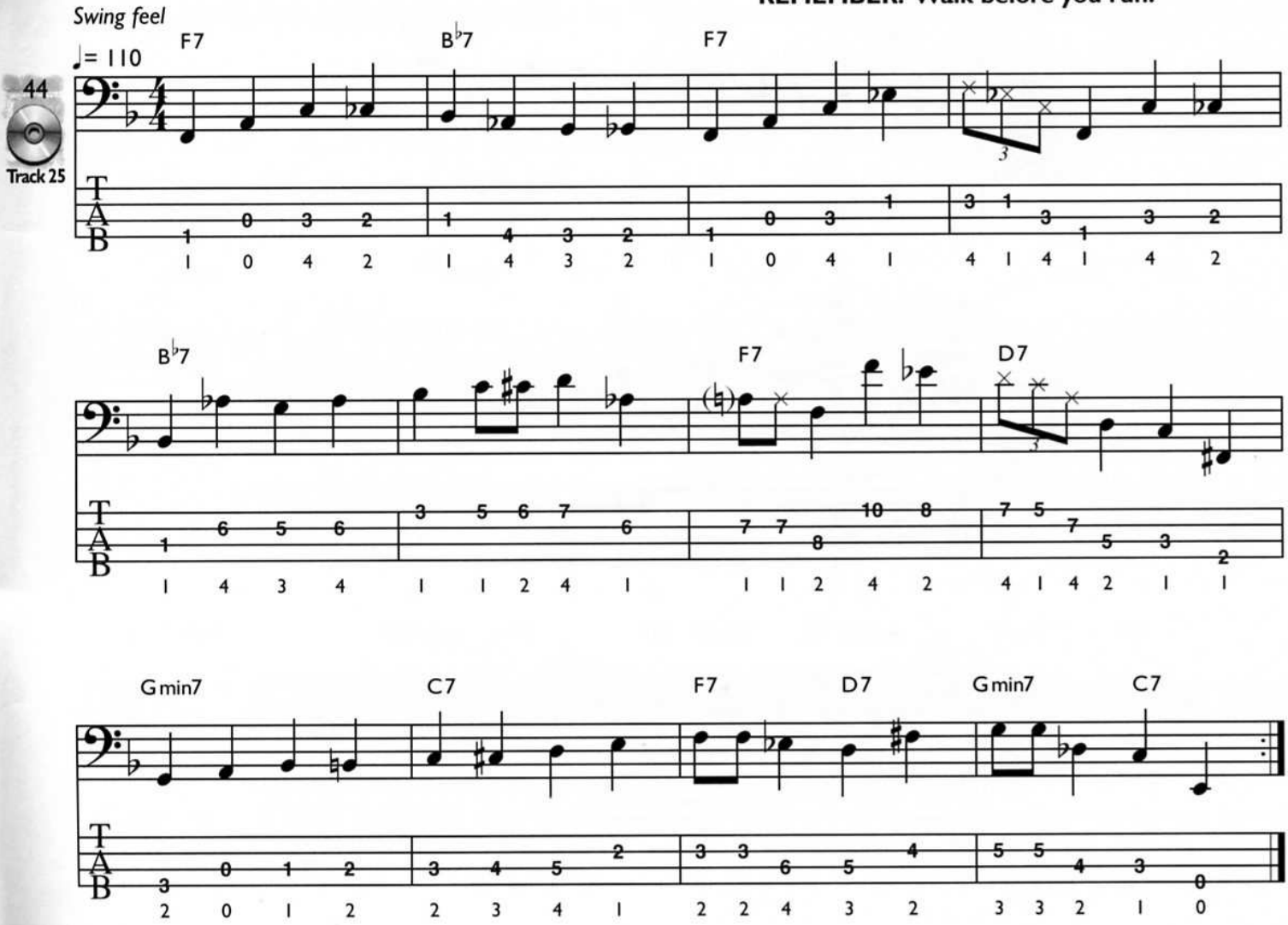
Let's build some swingin' jazz walks. Dig?

For our first walking bass examples, we will use the jazz blues progression. The jazz blues progression is similar to the blues progression you've already learned, but it does have some differences. Notice the I, VI, ii, V turnaround in the last two bars and the dominant 7 VI chord (VI7). These are commonly used in jazz tunes. Here's the jazz blues progression in F Major:



Here's a typical jazz walking bass line using many of the characteristics listed on page 38. Because of the importance of improvisation in jazz, your lines should constantly change and support the soloist. Being able to improvise a walking bass line over any set of chord changes is a required skill for jazz bassists. Notice the way scales, passing tones and arpeggios are used to create the lines. Start slowly and increase the tempo as you gain confidence.

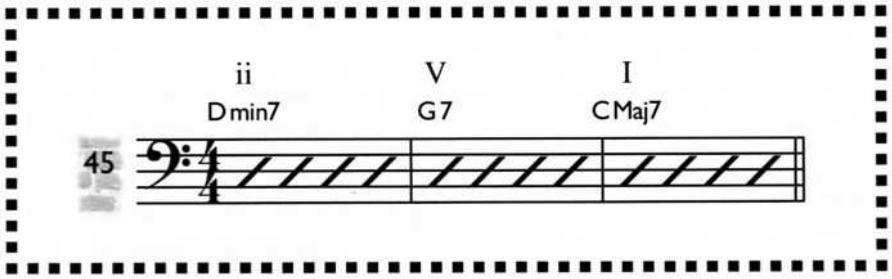
REMEMBER: Walk before you run!



The ii-V-I Chord Progression

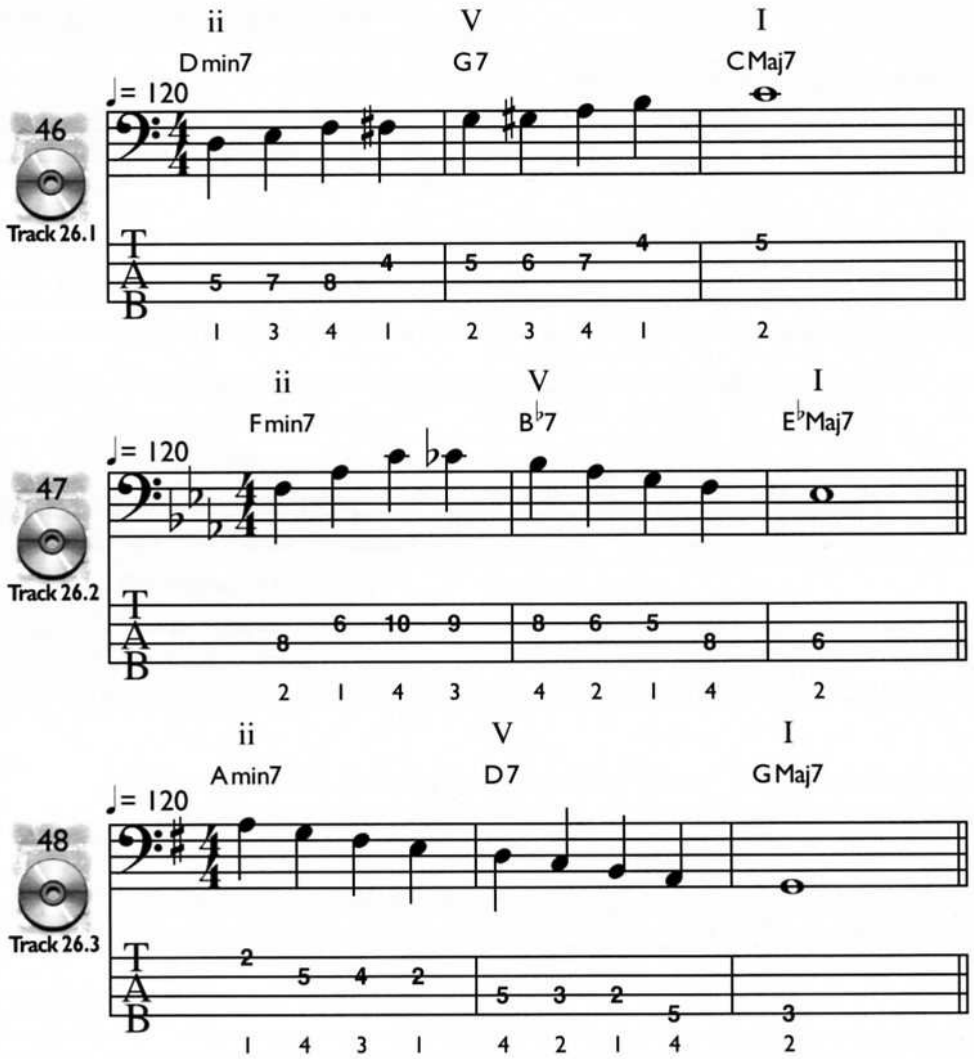
The ii-V-I progression can be heard in thousands of tunes played by jazz musicians. These tunes are often called *standards*. Some examples of jazz standards are *All The Things You Are*, *In A Mellow Tone* and *Autumn Leaves*. A good jazz musician will have hundreds of standards memorized and is able to play them in different keys. Memorizing chord changes may seem like an awesome task, but if you learn to see and hear the ii-V-I progression, it will become easier. This is because so many jazz standards are constructed with repeated ii-V-I progressions.

Here is the ii-V-I progression in the key of C Major. Notice how the ii and the V make you want to hear the I. It is a very logical sounding progression:



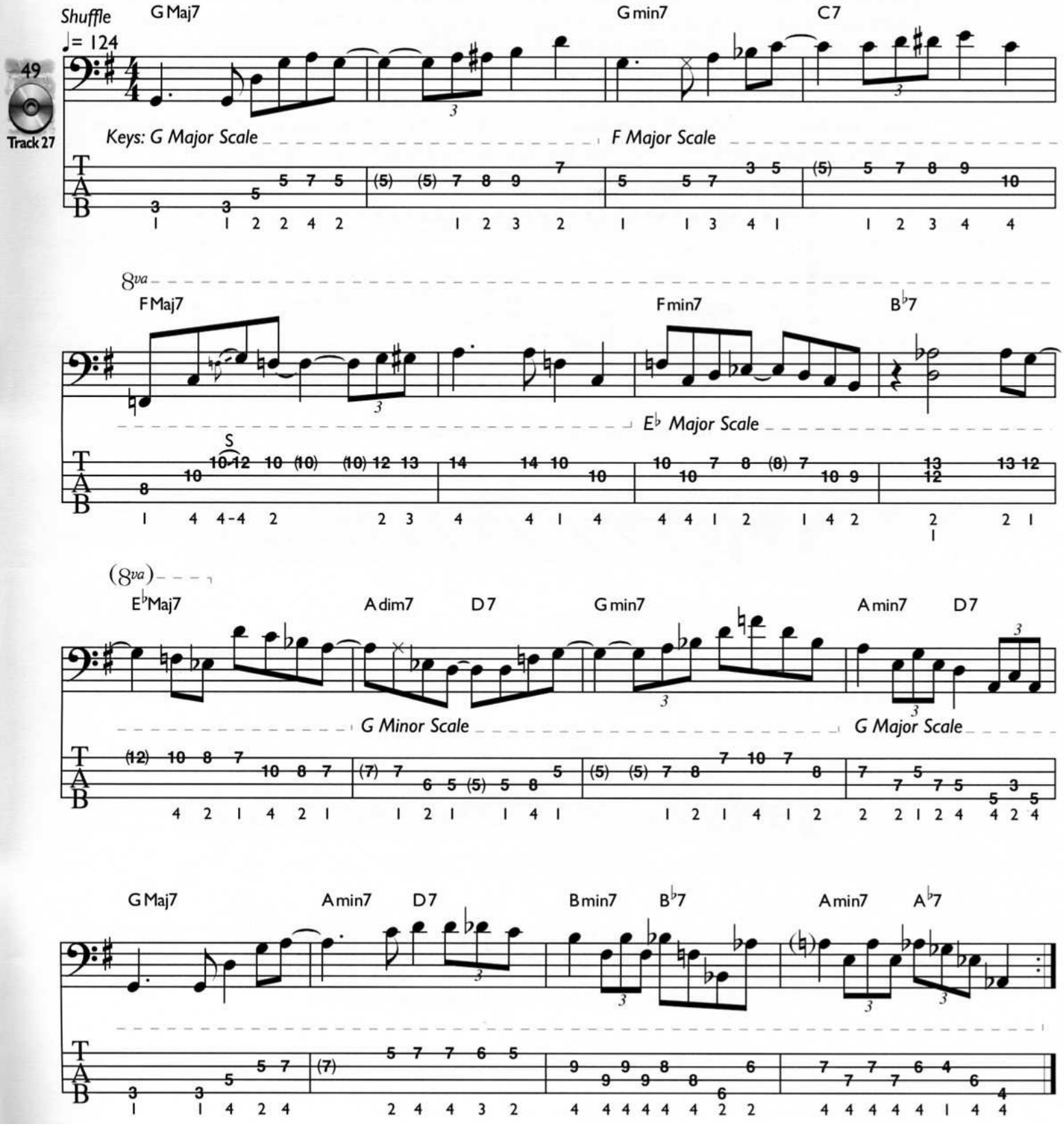
Learn this progression in every key and start checking out jazz standards that use it. A good place to start would be the example on page 41.

The examples below show the ii-V-I progression in different keys with some sample walking bass lines.



The *two-beat feel* is a common groove used by jazz bassists. This groove uses double-stops (two note played at once) and eighth notes in various rhythmic combinations to "break up" the four-to-the-bar walking bass pattern. This feel is often used in ballads or in the beginning of tunes before kicking into a walking bass pattern.

Below is a two-beat bass line on a jazz chord progression. Notice the frequent changes from key to key throughout this example. They are indicated to make them easy for you to find. These changes of key are accomplished with the well-known, well-used ii-V-I progression. These three chords from any key have the effect of establishing the key in our ears. So, if you string a bunch of ii-V-I progressions from different keys in a row, it will sound like the key is constantly changing.

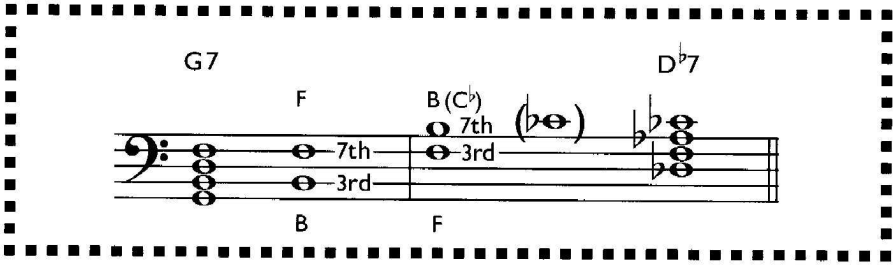


Bebop & Chord Substitutions

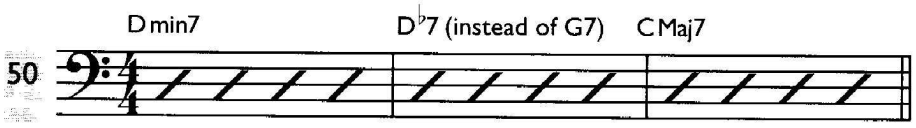
Bebop is a style of jazz that developed during the 1940s. Bebop expanded on the harmonies and tempos of previous jazz styles (Dixieland and swing) and created a new musical "language" that is still spoken today. Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie were pioneers of this style. It's important to understand the concepts of the bebop era because they are used very often in modern jazz. We'll focus on the most common bebop concept, *tritone chord substitutions*. Please read the following information SLOWLY. If you take your time and let it sink in, even complicated ideas can seem easy!

Substitution is the art of replacing an expected chord with another that accomplishes the same goal but with greater interest or surprise. *Tritone substitution* replaces one dominant 7th chord with another dominant 7th chord. The root of the substituted chord must be a tritone (an *interval* or distance of ♯4 or ♭5) away from the original chord. For instance, a G7 could be replaced by a D♭7 (G=1, A=2, B=3, C=4, D=5—now flat the 5, which is D, and you have a tritone). This substitution works because both chords share the most important notes—the 3 and ♭7. The interval between the 3 and ♭7 of any dominant 7th chord (a tritone, by the way) is responsible for its unique sound. In a tritone substitution, the 3 of the substituted chord is the same as the ♭7 of the original chord. The ♭7 of the substituted chord is the same as the 3 of the original chord.

Look at the example below:

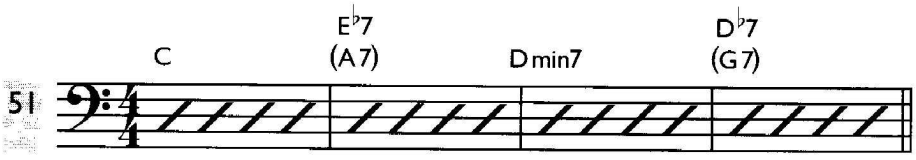


Tritone substitutions are very effective when they are applied to a ii-V-I progression.



Notice the chromatic movement in the bass. This creates harmonic interest and it also sounds cool!

Here's a tritone substitution applied to a I, VI, ii, V progression. The standard progression is given in parenthesis.

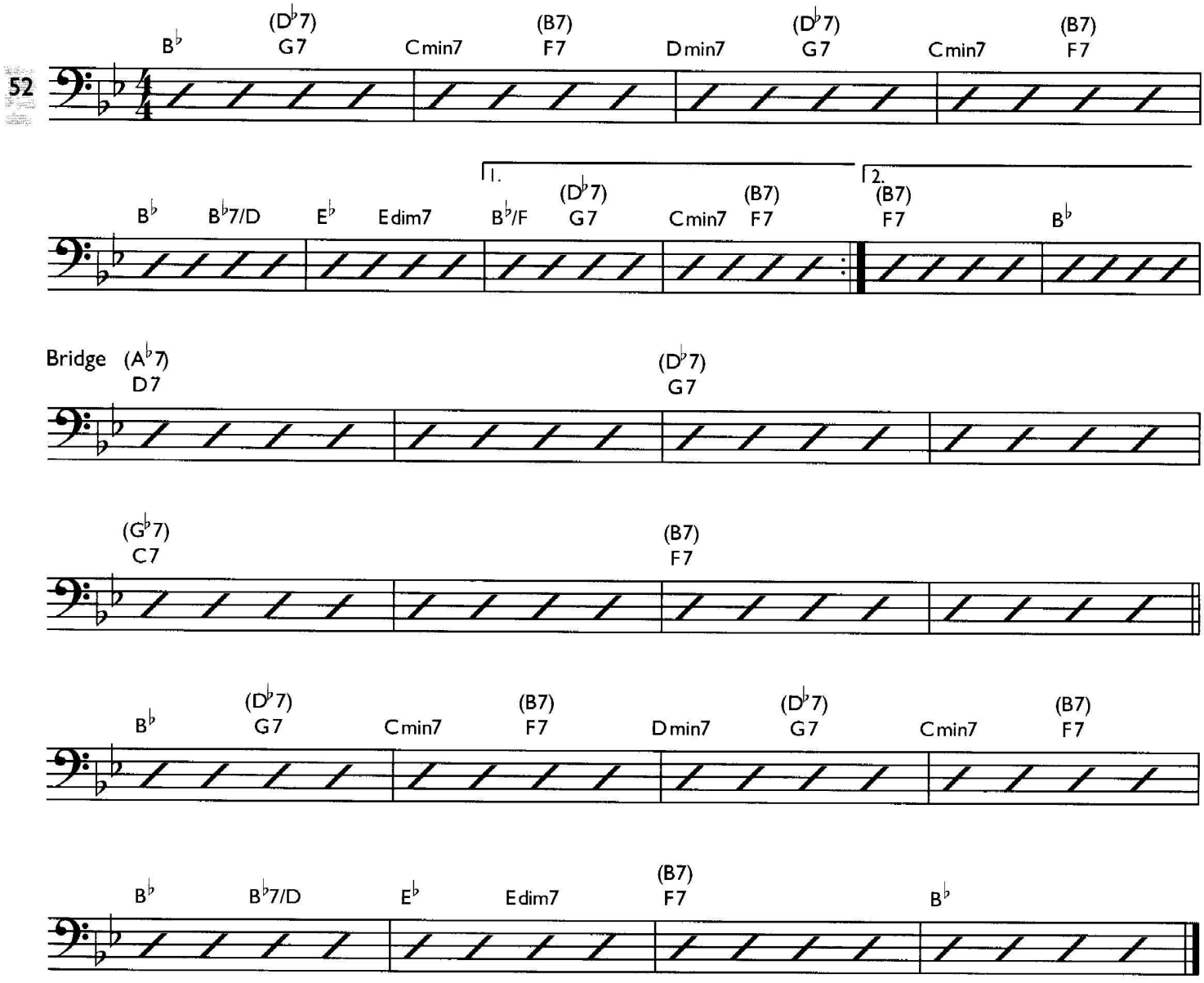


Now that you understand this harmonic device, go back and apply it to earlier examples from this chapter. Always use tritone substitutions with taste. Don't overuse them!

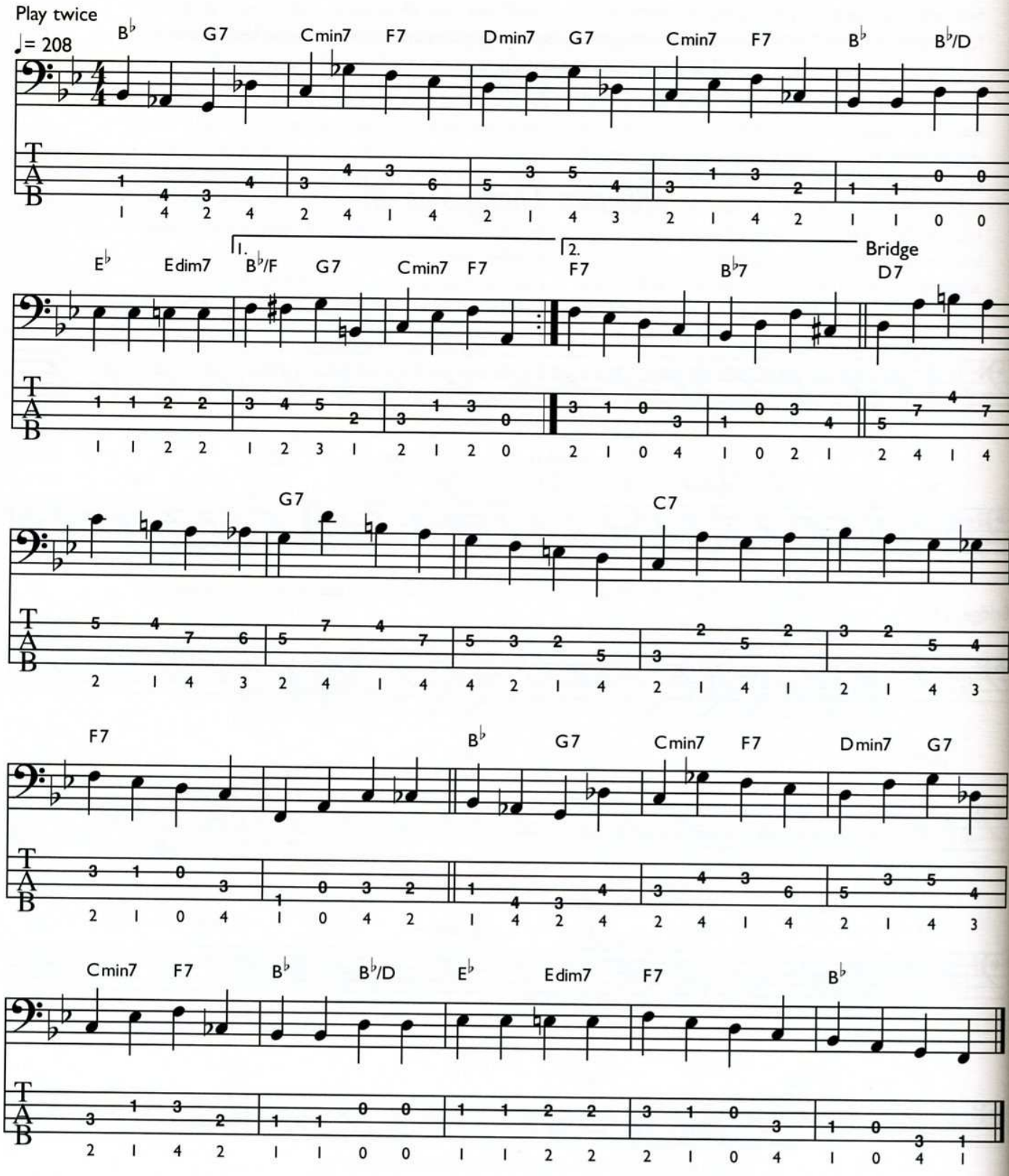
The following thirty-two bar form is in the style of the chord changes ("changes" is jazz lingo for "chord progression") to George Gershwin's tune, *I Got Rhythm*. These chord changes have been the basis for countless jazz tunes including *Oleo*, *Lester Leaps In* and *Shaw Nuff*. In fact, the changes are so common that jazz musicians call them *rhythm changes*. Jazzers use these changes often because there are many opportunities for chord substitutions.

In the following tune, the substitutions are in parentheses. Use the 1, 3, 5 and 7 of all the chords in your bass line and memorize this progression. Pick a slow tempo so you have time to think.

Rhythm Changes in B♭



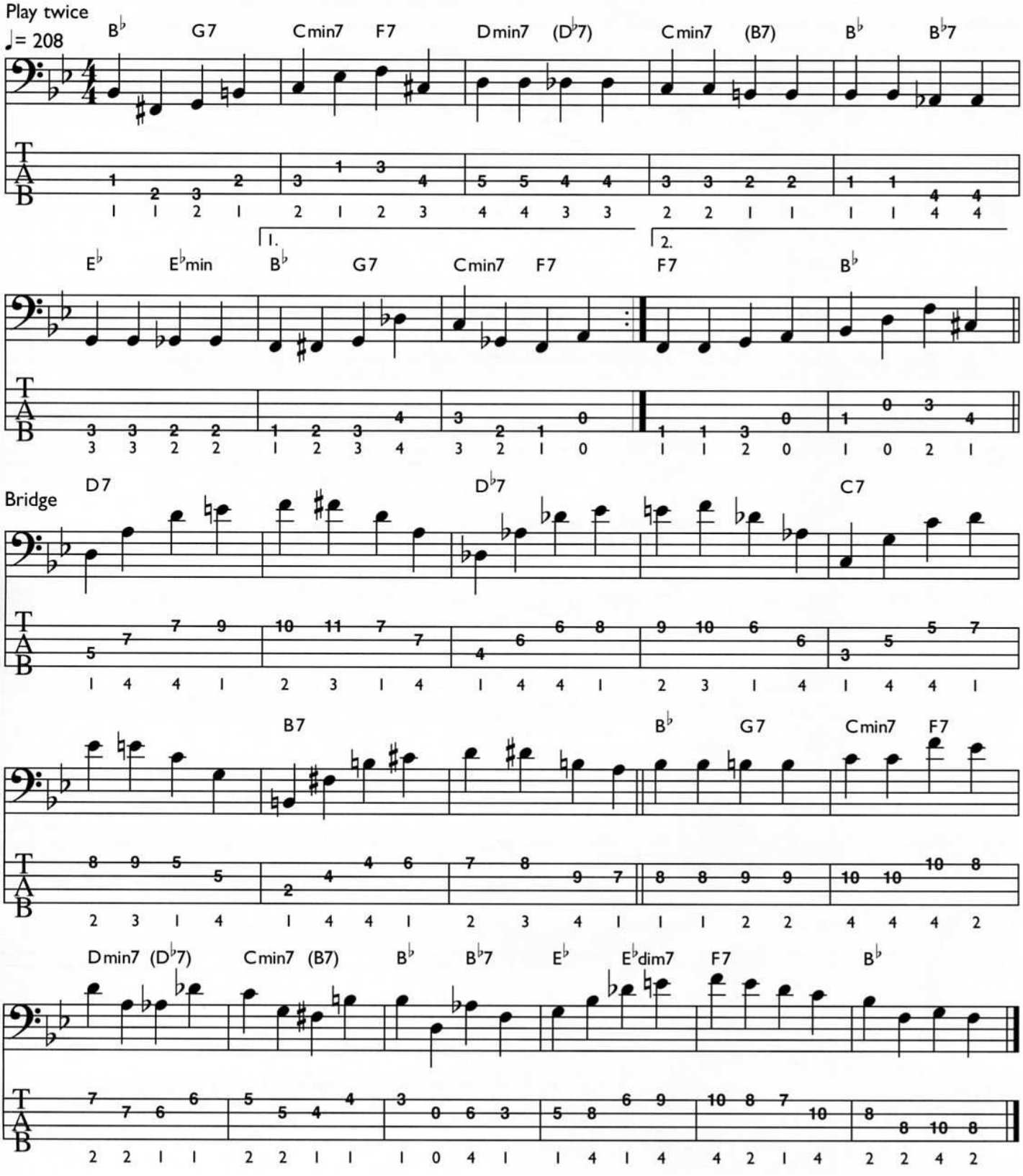
Bebop Tune on Rhythm Changes



The substitutions are in parenthesis.

Track 29

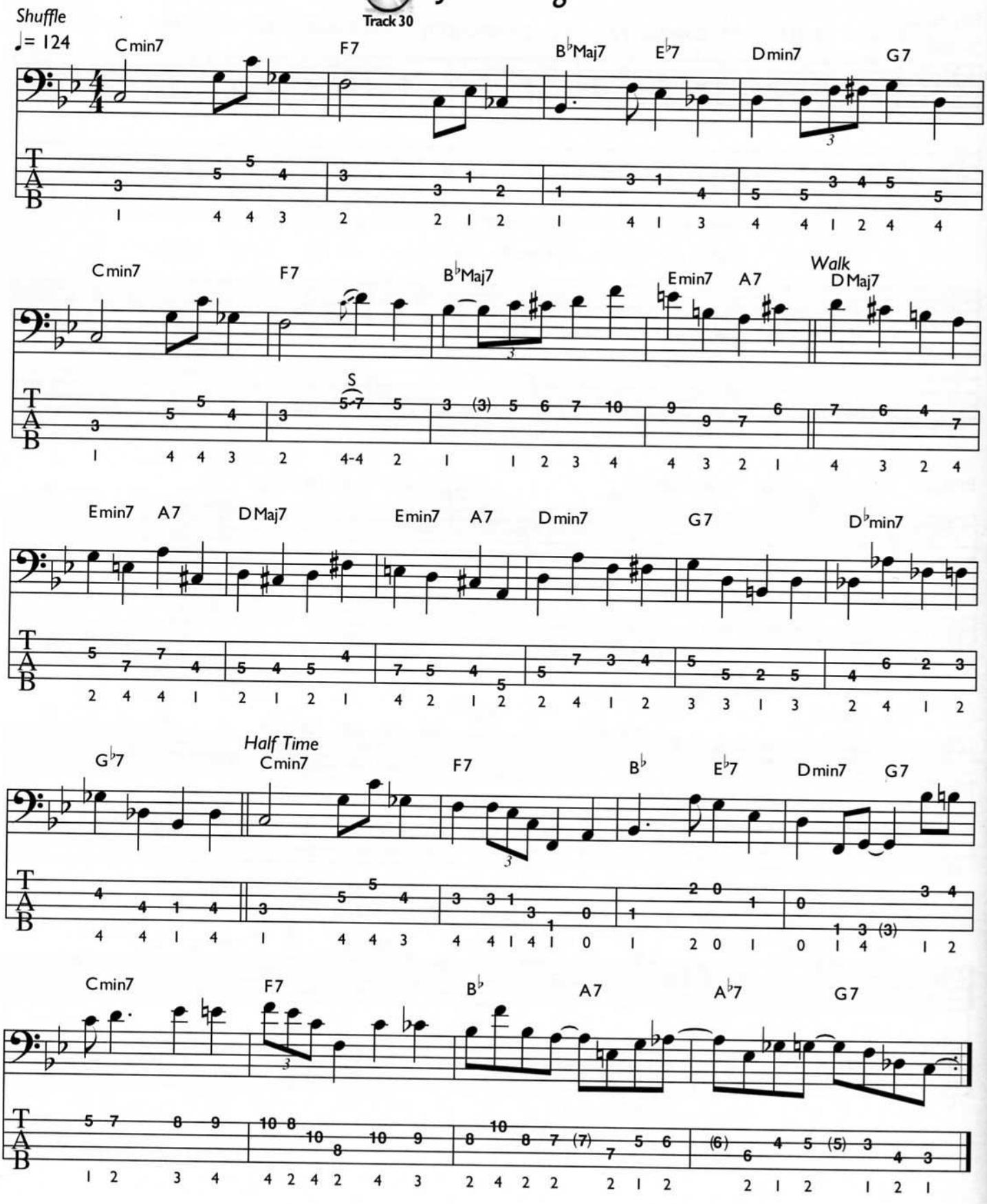
Tritone Substitutions Variation



Swing originated around 1930, around the time New Orleans style jazz was declining in popularity. It has always defied definition, but it is characterized by a greater emphasis on solo improvisation, bigger bands and a more equal weight given to each beat of the bar (the style is sometimes called "four-beat jazz). Notice the use of the two-beat feel (page 41) in the first eight bars.

Jazz Swing Tune

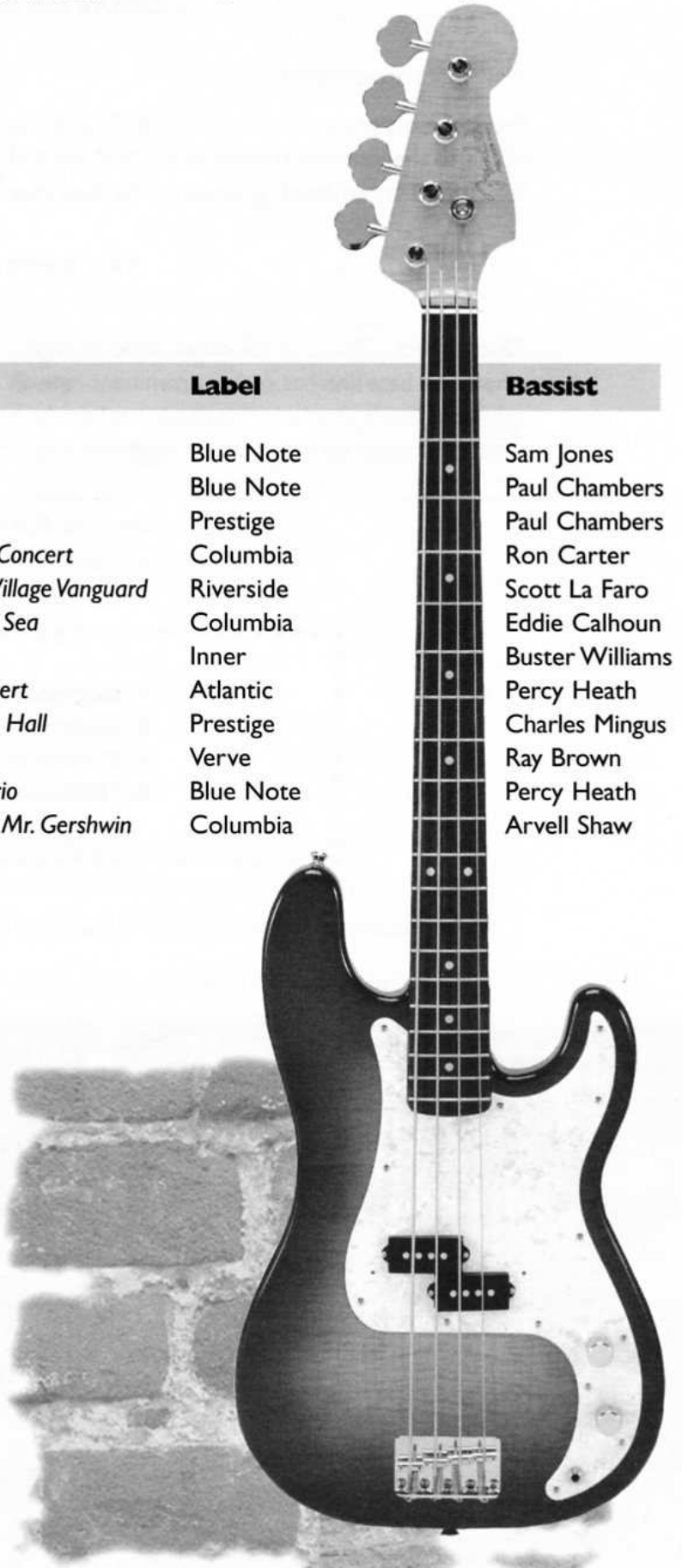
Track 30



Jazz Summary and Discography (Walking Bass)

Walking bass, or "four-beats-to-the-bar" is the most commonly used bass pattern in jazz. A good walking bass line should provide rhythmic, harmonic and even melodic support to the music. Because of the importance of improvisation in jazz, walking bass lines should also sound spontaneous and be interactive with the soloist. Walking bass is the foundation of most jazz tunes, so having thorough knowledge of this style is a must for bassists playing jazz. Here's a list of recordings containing some great walking bass lines. Start listening and then start walking!

Artist/Group	Recording	Label	Bassist
Cannonball Adderley	*Somethin' Else*	Blue Note	Sam Jones
John Coltrane	*Blue Trane*	Blue Note	Paul Chambers
Miles Davis	*Cookin'*	Prestige	Paul Chambers
Miles Davis	*The Complete Concert*	Columbia	Ron Carter
Bill Evans	*Sunday At The Village Vanguard*	Riverside	Scott La Faro
Errol Garner	*Concert By the Sea*	Columbia	Eddie Calhoun
Hank Jones	*Love For Sale*	Inner	Buster Williams
Modern Jazz Quartet	*European Concert*	Atlantic	Percy Heath
Charlie Parker	*Jazz At Massey Hall*	Prestige	Charles Mingus
Oscar Peterson	*The Trio*	Verve	Ray Brown
Horace Silver	*Horace Silver Trio*	Blue Note	Percy Heath
Teddy Wilson	*Mr. Wilson and Mr. Gershwin*	Columbia	Arvell Shaw



Chapter 5

Funk

***Funk* (fungk)**, *n, a style of music that requires a bassist to simultaneously play loose yet tight on both complex rhythms with simple harmonies, or simple rhythms with complex harmonies, while still retaining a GROOVE that makes everybody move.*

Now *that's* a definition!

From the simple grooves of Booker T. and the M.G.'s, to the intricate grooves of Earth, Wind and Fire, to the thrash/punk grooves of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, funk music definitely has some wide boundaries. Within these various funk grooves, however, one thing remains constant:

THE BASS LINE RULES!

That's a fact. There is no other style of music where the bass line has such a prominent role. A solid bass line is crucial in this music because funk is built from the bottom up. Although some funk bass lines can be very complex, they still have to groo and support the music. Keep that in mind when y are building funk bass lines.

Sooner or later "the FUNK is gonna getcha," so here's a list of some common characteristics of this style:

1. Repetitive patterns
2. Locking-in
3. Continuous line
4. Thumb/slap/popping

These techniques will be covered extensively in this chapter so get ready to get funky!

PHOTO CREDIT COURTESY OF STAR FILE,INC.

Mark King

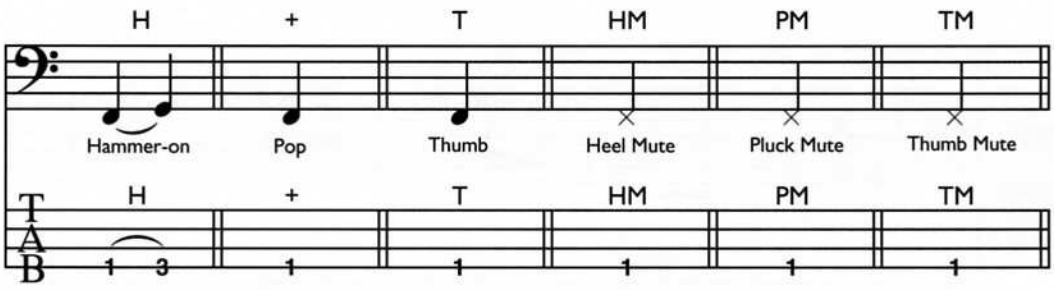
was the bass player with British rock act, Level 42. They were known for playing pop tunes with intense funk grooves. Their song, ***Something About You*** *was a top 20 hit in 1986.*

Funk Bass Techniques

Funk bassists have developed techniques that have revolutionized the instrument. Below is a key that shows you how these techniques will be notated. If you are an arranger and writing out lines for a player, try using the symbols shown for these techniques. Please read this section thoroughly! Using these techniques in various combinations can produce limitless funk bass lines.

Please note that the instructions describing the techniques are written for right-handed players. Lefties can reverse them.

Key to Funk Technique Notation



Technical Instructions

H = hammer on - Strike the string with your right hand. While the string is ringing, re-attack with your left hand to create a new note.

+ = pop - Pull the string out with any right-hand finger causing it to bounce against the frets making a percussive sound.

T = thumb slap - Strike the string with the thumb of your right hand.

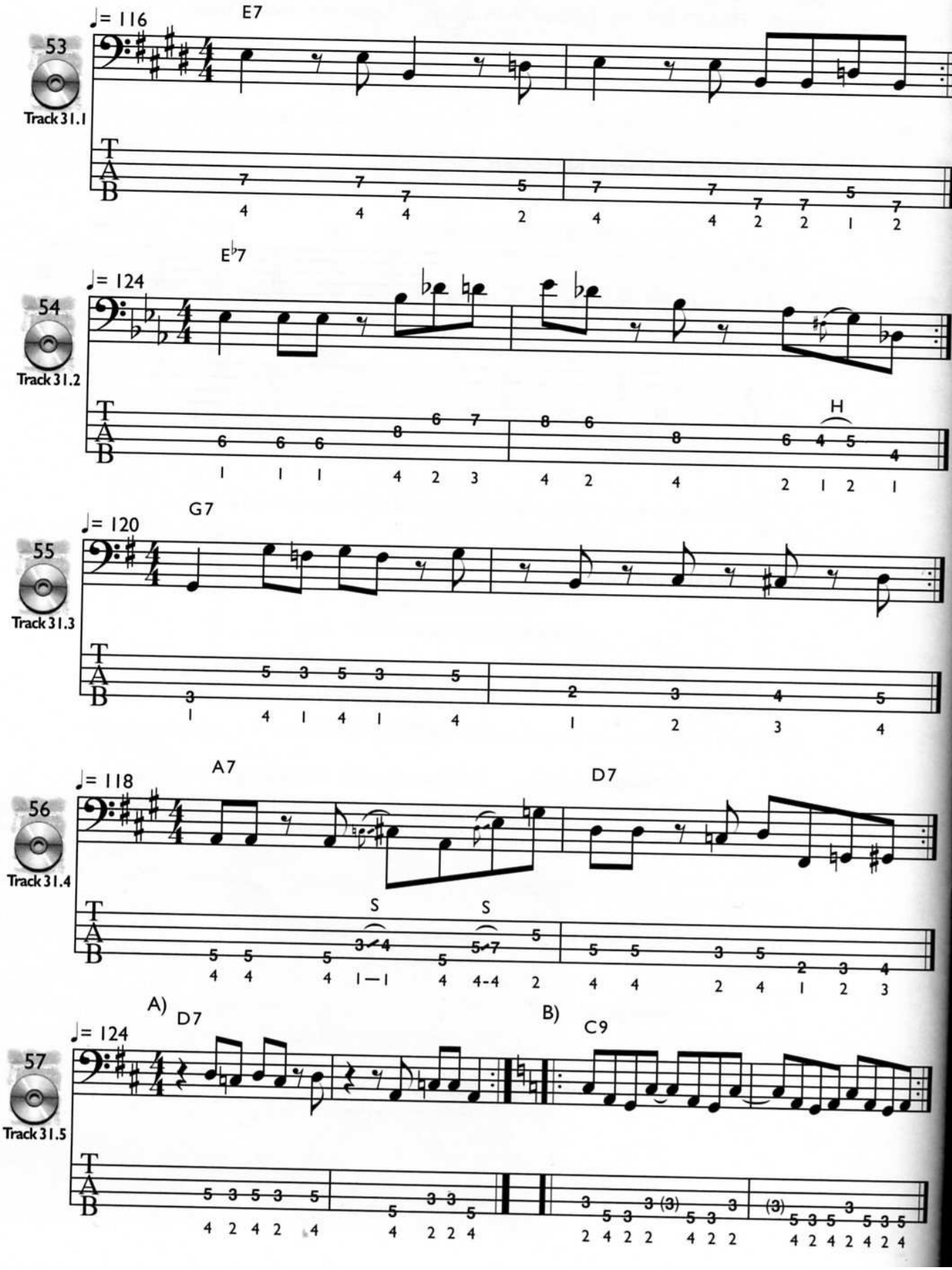
HM = heel mute - Strike the string with the heel of your right hand while muting the same string with your left hand.

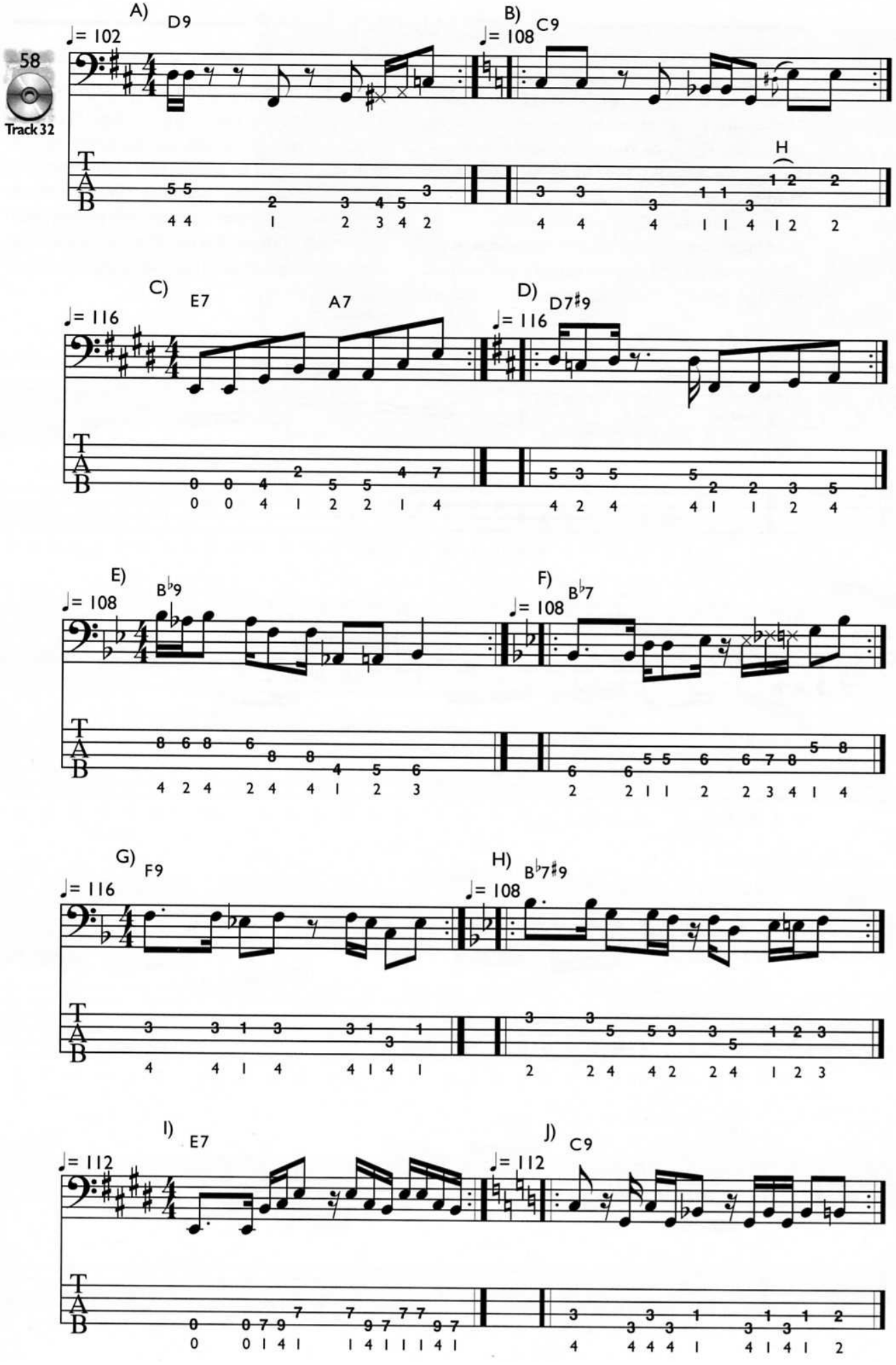
PM = pluck mute - Pluck the string with your right hand while muting the same string with your left hand.

TM = thumb mute - Strike the string with your right hand thumb while muting the same string with your left hand.

Repetitive Style

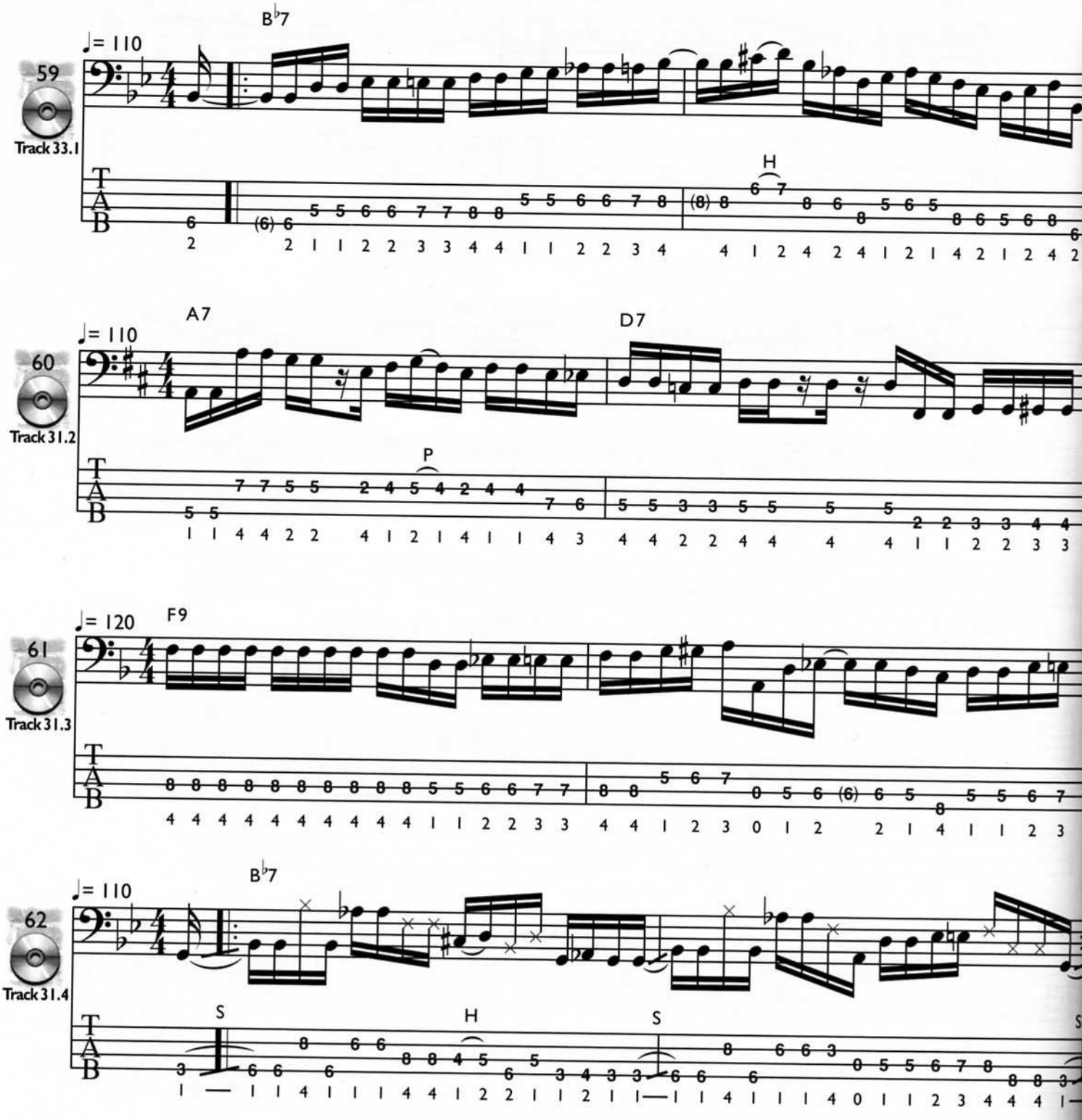
As you have seen and heard in previous chapters, many bass lines are built using repetitive one or two bar patterns. Funk bass lines also use this technique and are often the "hook" or most recognizable part of the tune. Some classic repetitive bass lines can be heard on the tunes such *as It's The Same Old Song* by The Four Tops (played by James Jamerson), *Funky Broadway* by Wilson Pickett (played by Tommy Cogbill) and *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* by James Brown (played by Sam Thomas). Below are some funk bass patterns ranging from simple to complex.




58
Track 32
A)
D9
♩= 102
B)
C9
♩= 108
H
C)
E7
A7
♩= 116
D)
D7♯9
♩= 116
E)
B♭9
♩= 108
F)
B♭7
♩= 108
G)
F9
♩= 116
H)
B♭7♯9
♩= 108
I)
E7
♩= 112
J)
C9
♩= 112

Continuous Line

A *continuous line* is created using continuous sixteenth or eighth notes (depending on the tempo) broken up by syncopated mutes, rests and passing tones. This style is very "busy," both rhythmically and harmonically. It is also highly improvisational. This type of line should only be used in the correct context, where the rest of the instruments are playing very sparsely, and the bass is almost soloing. Some examples of this style are *What Is Hip?* by Tower Of Power (played by Rocco Prestia), *Come On Come Over* by Jaco Pastorius (played by Jaco Pastorius) and *Benadette* by The Four Tops (played by James Jamerson). Here are some continuous-line examples. Practice these lines slowly and make sure you are playing each note evenly with good time. Then work them up to the suggested tempos. Let's be careful out there!



Jaco Pastorius

was a brilliant bassist who was adept in jazz and funk styles. In the 1970s he played with the fusion group, Weather Report, which also featured saxophonist, Wayne Shorter and pianist, Joe Zawinul. In the early '80s he toured with his big band, Word of Mouth. Tragically, he died in 1987 at the age of 35.

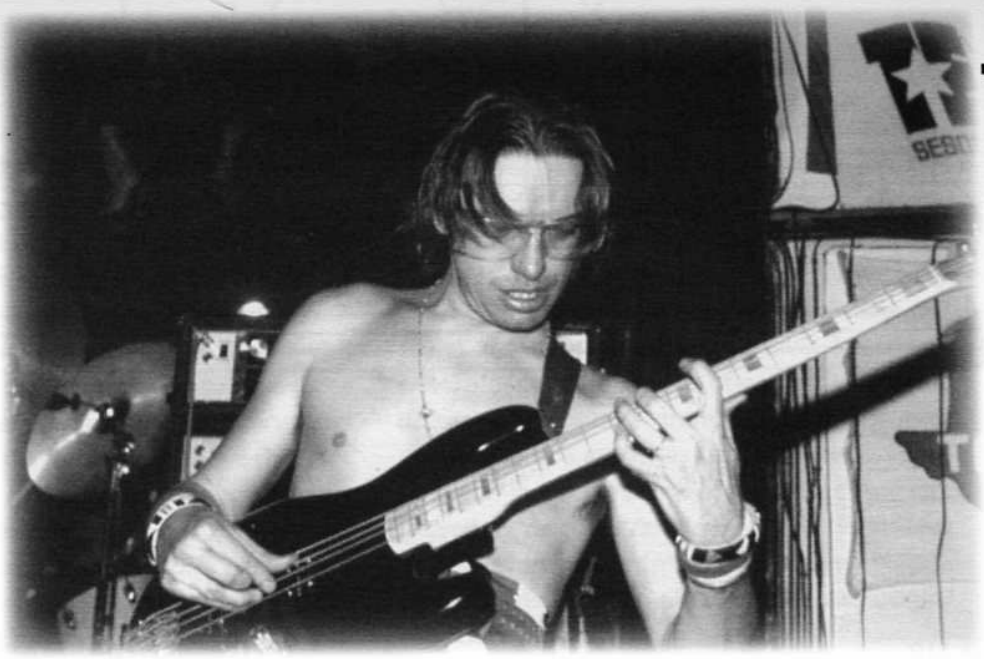
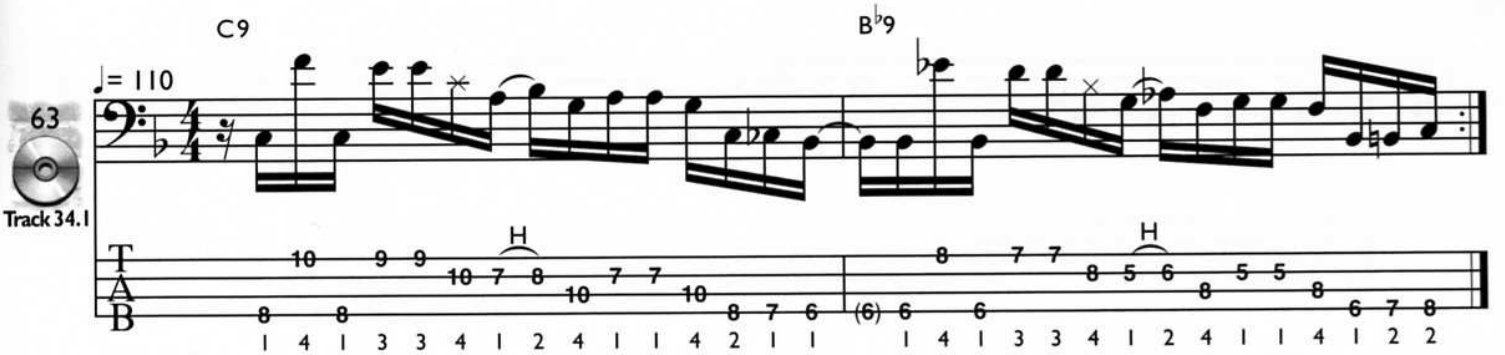
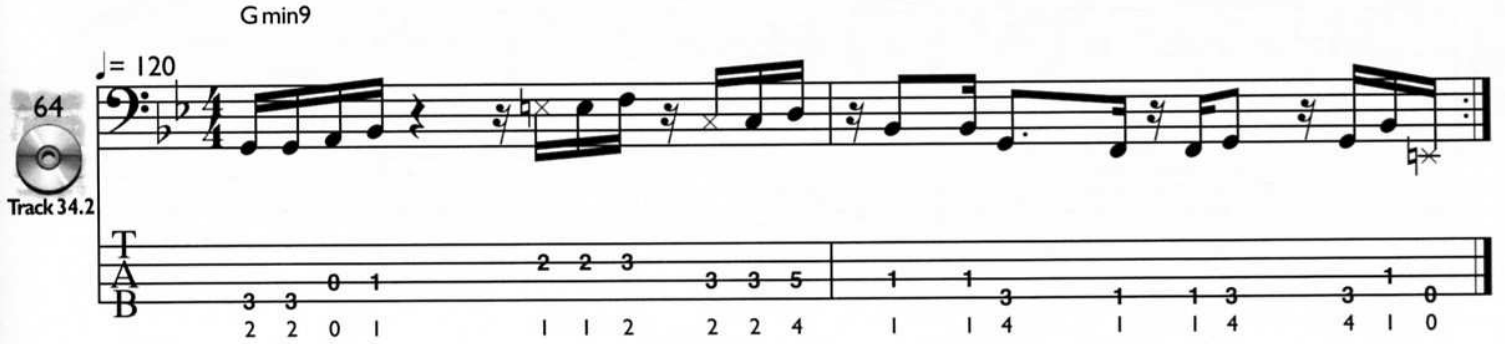
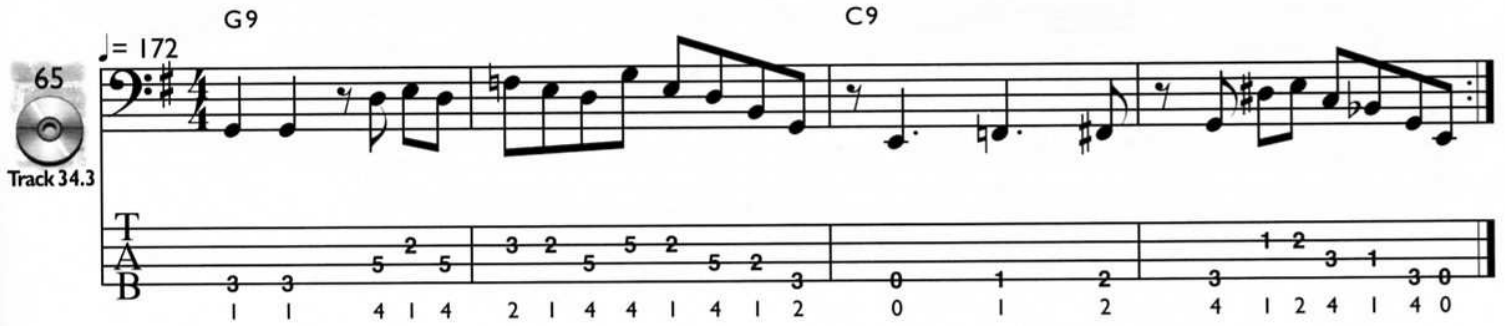
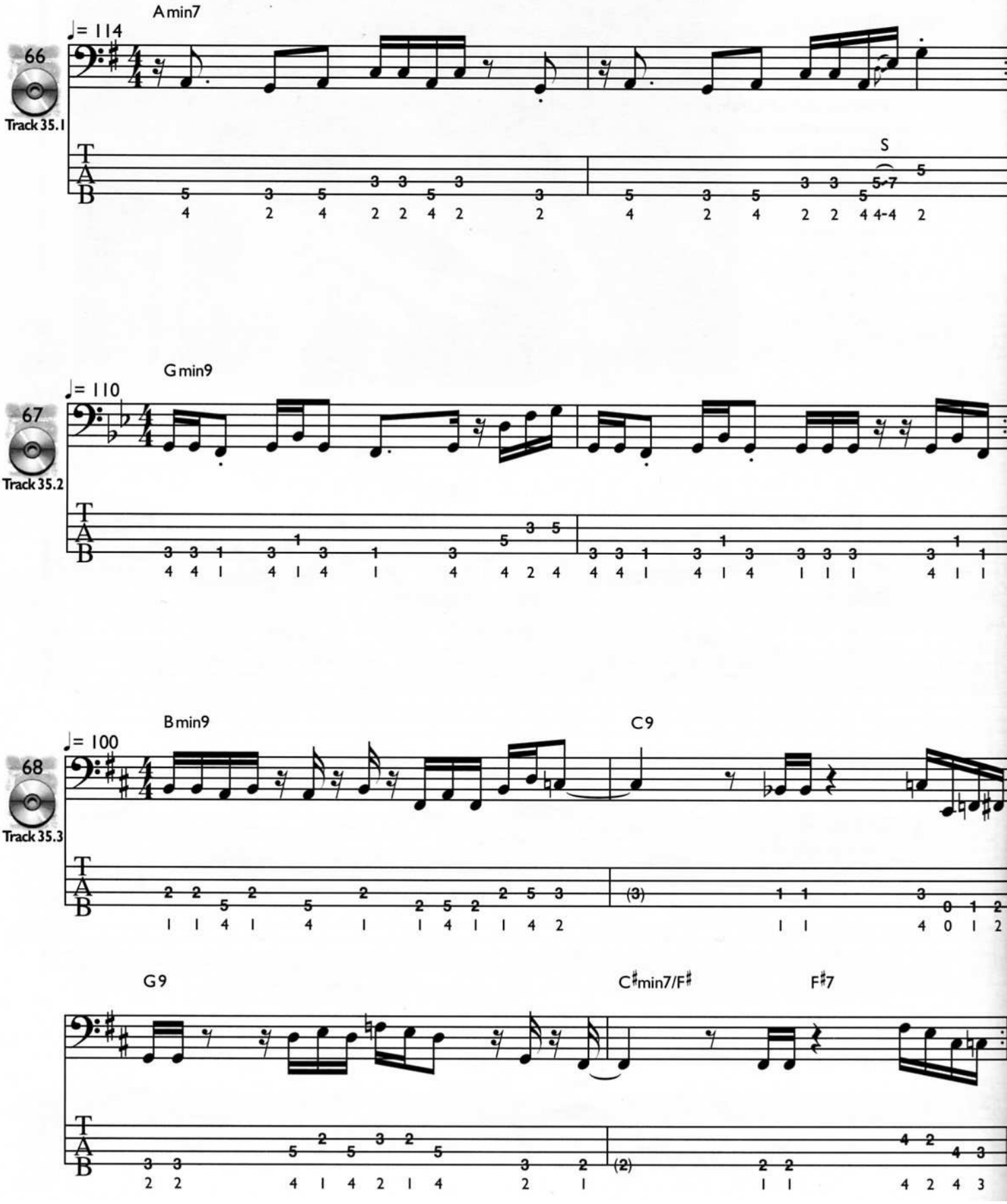


PHOTO CREDIT DAVID SEELIG / COURTESY OF STAR FILE,INC.





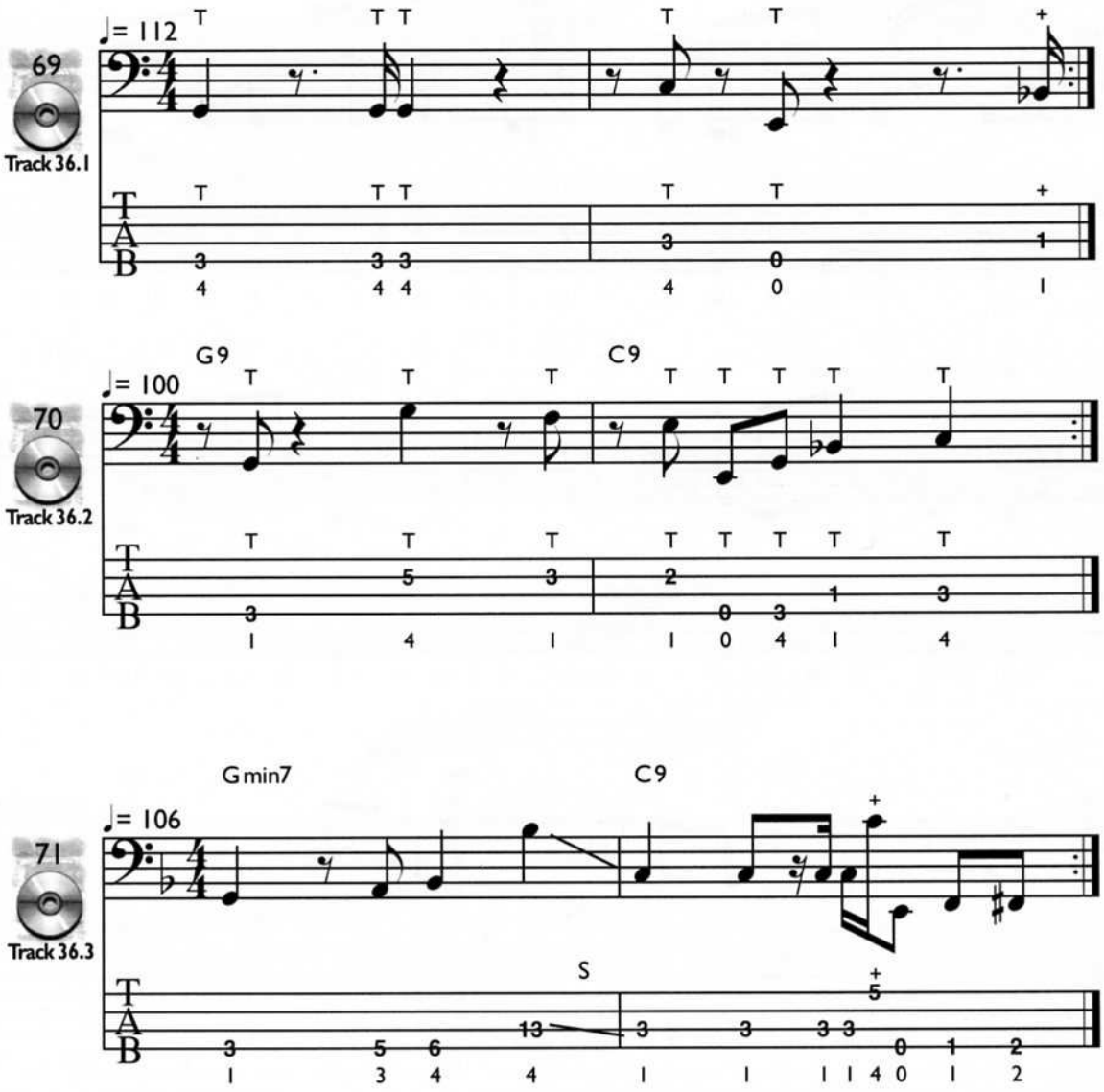


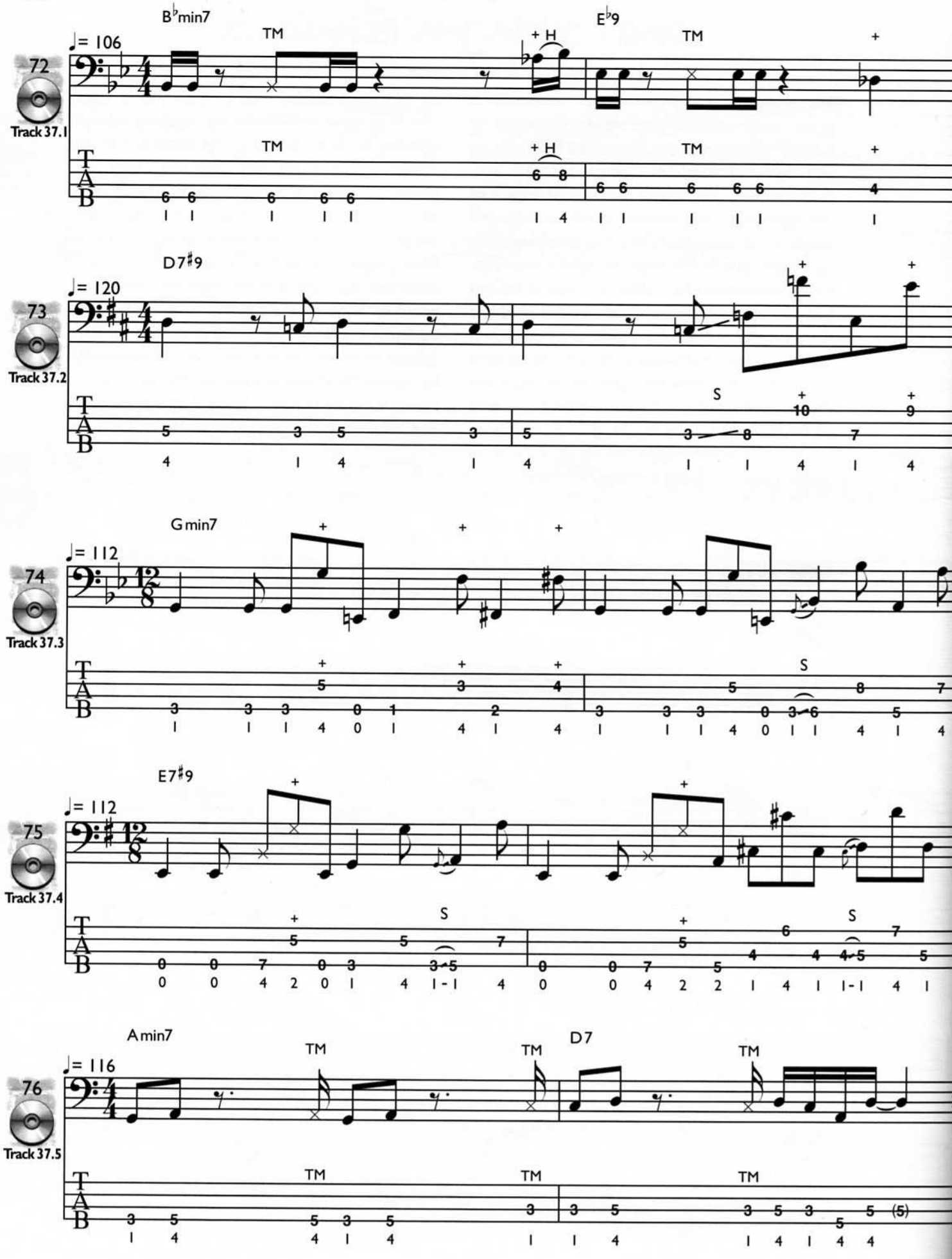

Amin7
♩= 114
66
Track 35.1
S
Gmin9
♩= 110
67
Track 35.2
Bmin9
C9
♩= 100
68
Track 35.3
G9
C♯min7/F♯
F♯7

Thumb Slap & Pop and Locking-In Techniques

The ***thumb slap & pop*** technique has become synonymous with funk bass playing. Pioneered by Larry Graham (bassist for Sly and the Family Stone and leader of Graham Central Station), this technique uses the thumb and all four fingers of the right hand. Striking down on the strings with the thumb (slapping) and plucking (popping) with any finger (usually the index or middle), produces a very percussive effect. Adding mutes, slides and hammer-ons gives the bassist even more rhythmic variation. As with all techniques, don't overuse it in your playing or arrangements or it will become stale very fast. Some examples of this style are *Pow* by Graham Central Station (played by Larry Graham), *Run For Cover* by David Sanborn (played by Marcus Miller) and *Me And My Bass Guitar* by Victor Wooten (played by Victor Wooten).

Locking-in is another funk concept that is often used in conjunction with the slap & pop technique. Locking-in occurs when the bass line is in rhythmic unison (exactly together) with the rhythmic pattern of the bass drum. This is very effective and creates a serious groove! Bass and drums should work together in all styles, so you bass players should practice with a "real" drummer (not just a drum machine) whenever possible. Some examples of great locking-in can be found in *Shining Star* by Earth, Wind And Fire (played by Verdine White) and *She's A Super Lady* by Luther Vandross (played by Marcus Miller). Here's a whole bunch of funky lines so "lock-in" and "throwdown!"

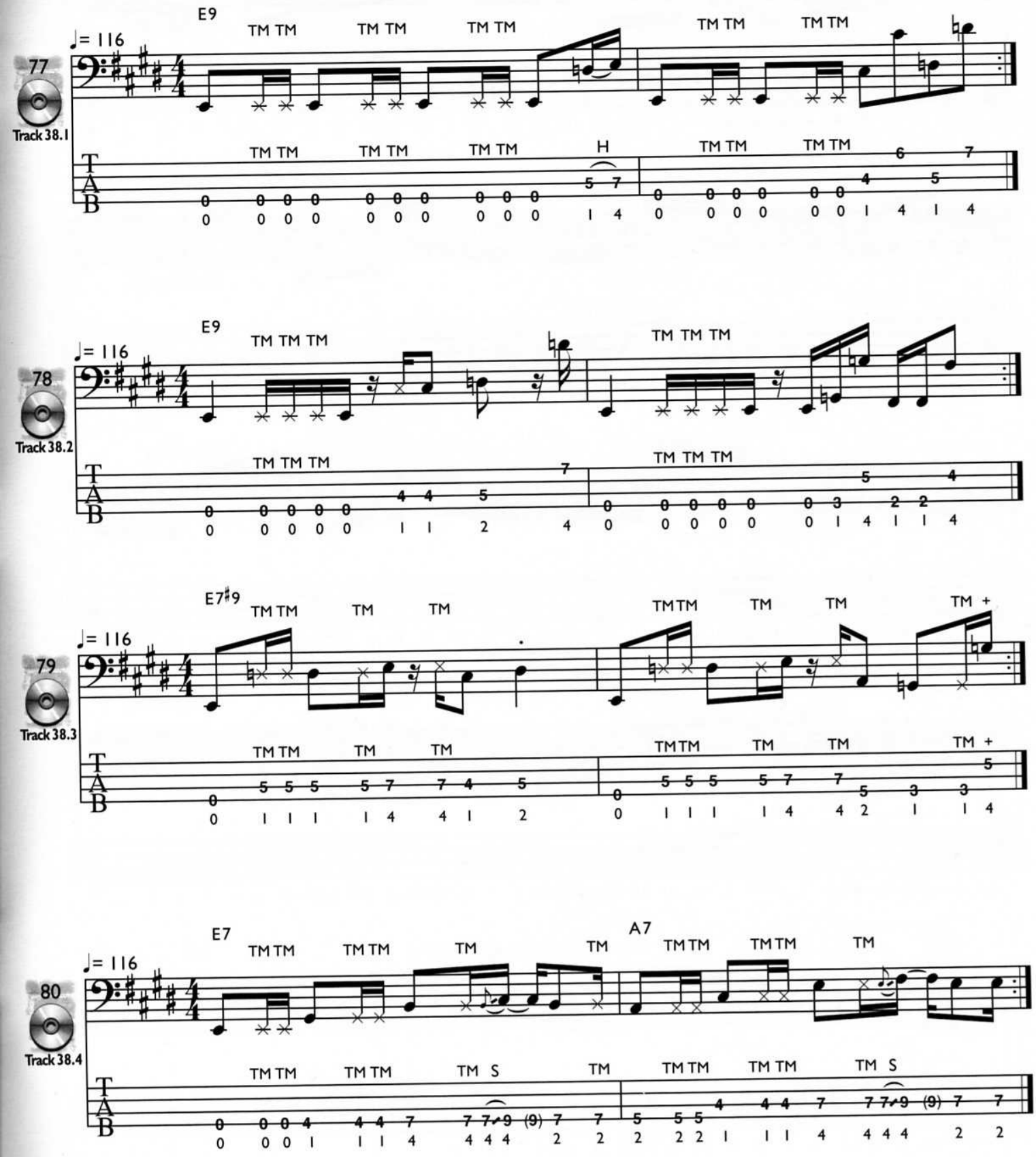



B♭min7
E♭9
♩= 106
72
Track 37.1
TM
+ H
D7♯9
♩= 120
73
Track 37.2
S
Gmin7
♩= 112
74
Track 37.3
E7♯9
♩= 112
75
Track 37.4
Amin7
D7
♩= 116
76
Track 37.5

For Bass Players

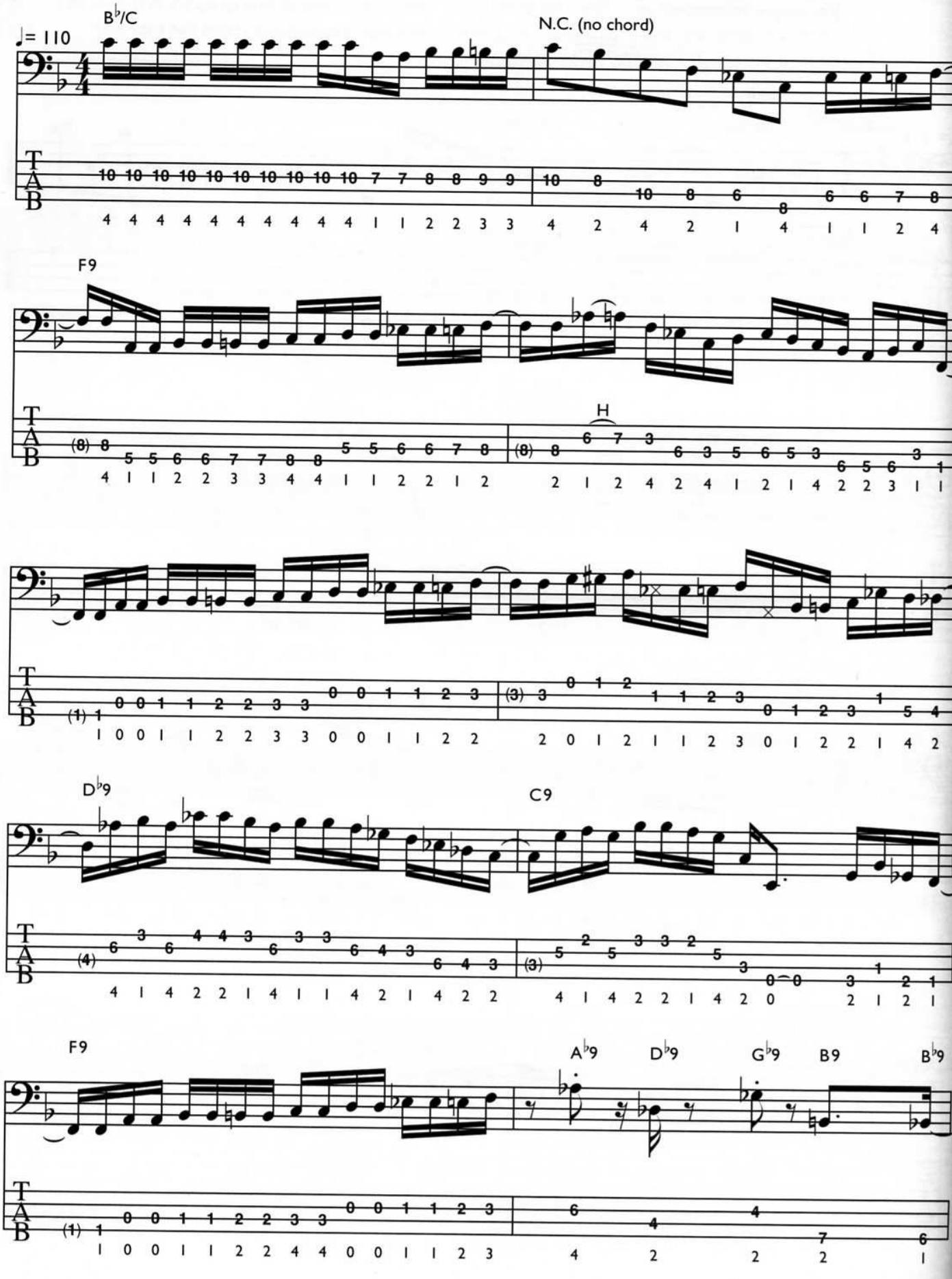
Last Call For Thumbs

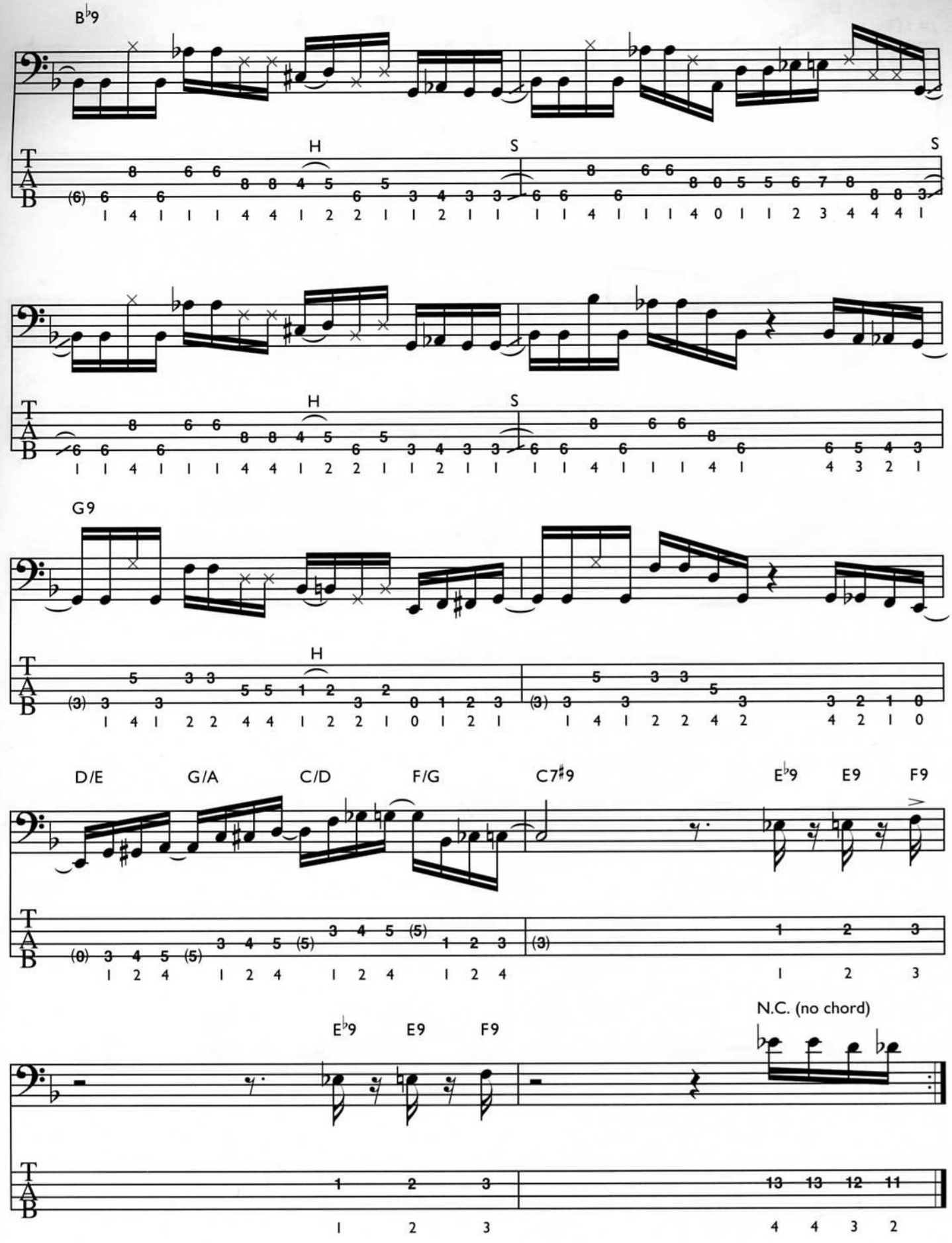
Just to give your thumb technique a bit more of a workout, here are some patterns using the open E string. Try playing these patterns in other keys. Not all funk tunes are in the key of E, although it sometimes seems like they are!



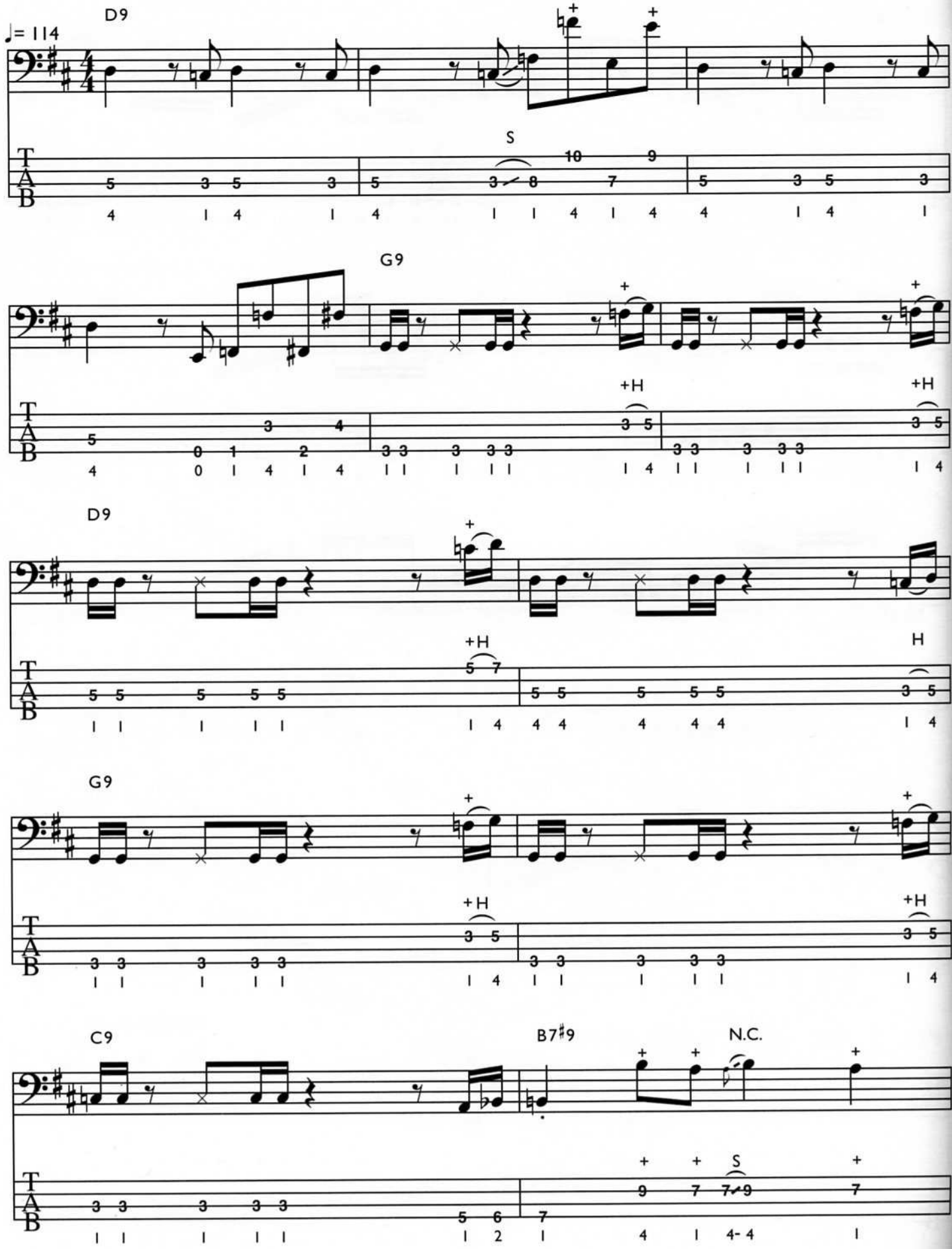
Track 39

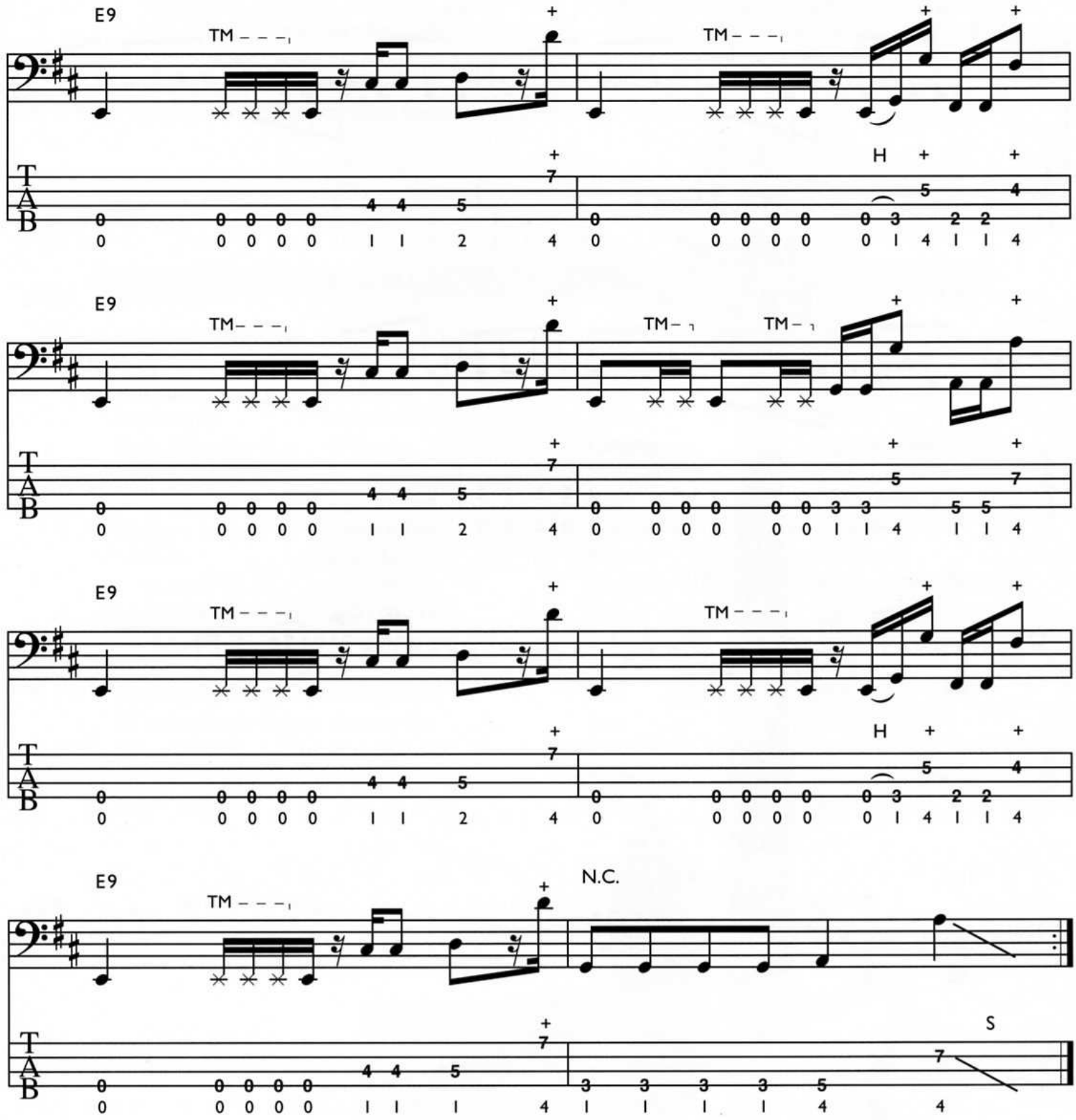
Continuous-Line Funk Tune




B♭9
H
S
S
H
S
G9
H
D/E
G/A
C/D
F/G
C7♯9
E♭9
E9
F9
E♭9
E9
F9
N.C. (no chord)

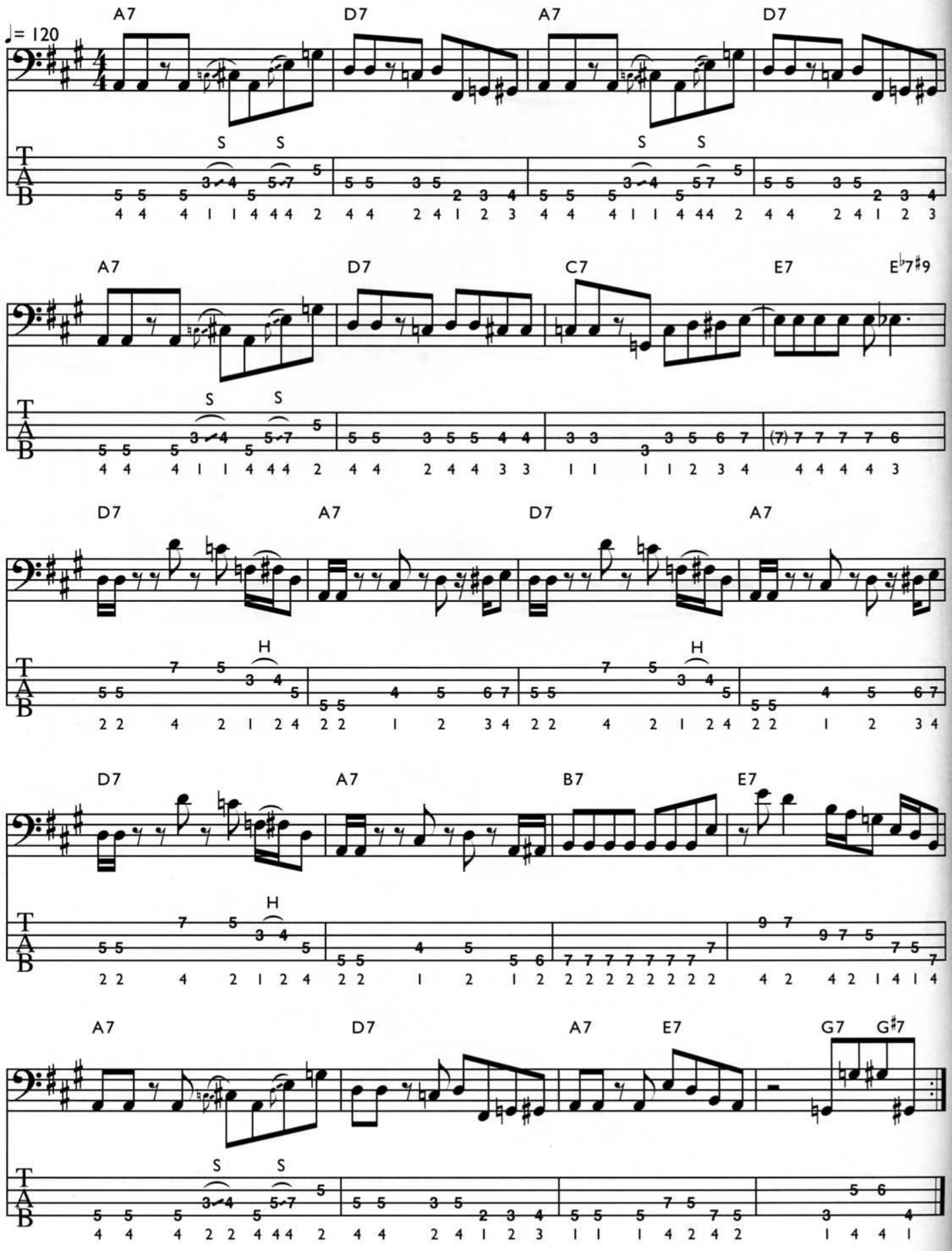
Thumb Funk




E9
TM
H
E9
TM
E9
TM
H
E9
TM
N.C.
S

Repetitive-Line Funk

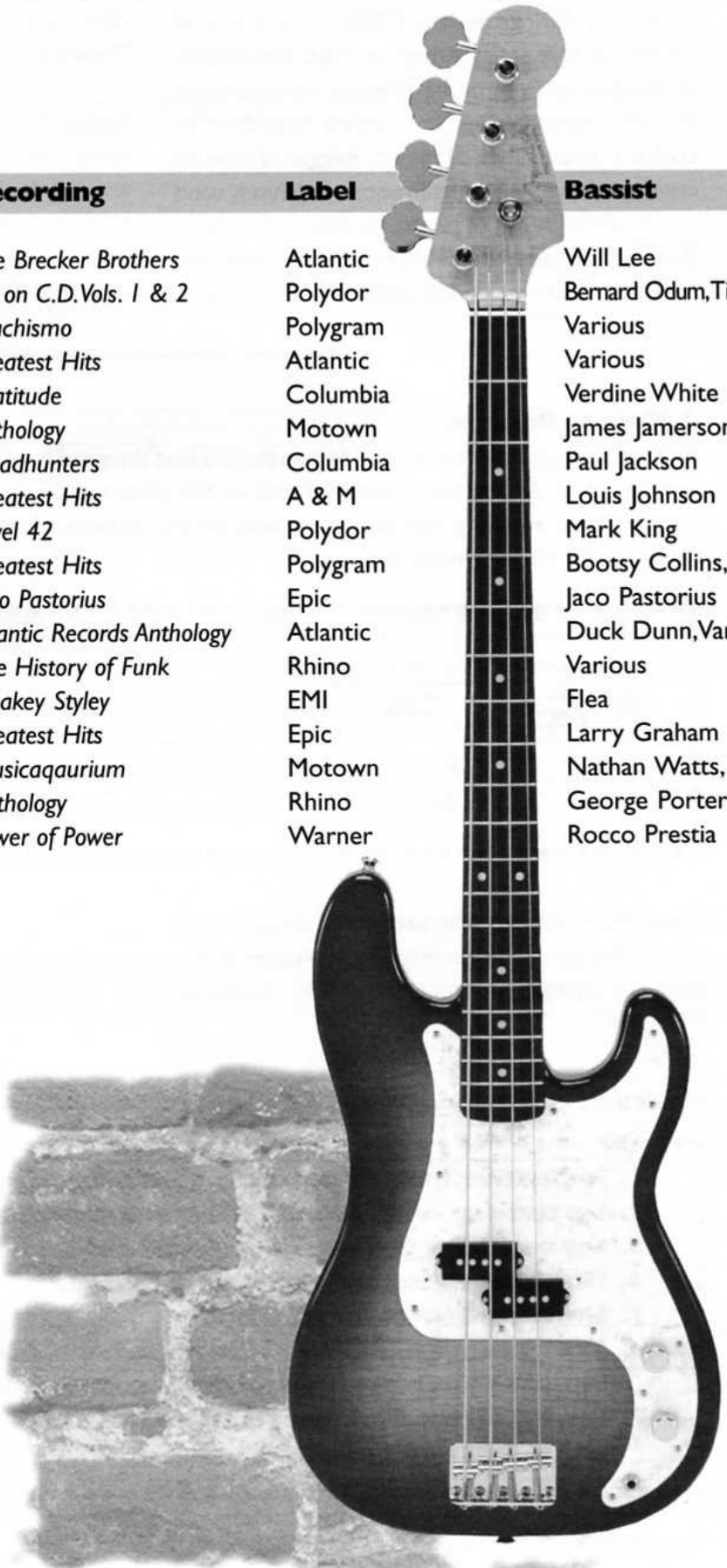
Track 41



Funk Summary & Discography

The bass is the most prominent instrument in funk music. A funky bass line is the backbone to countless funk tunes and is the most essential element in this style. A funk bass line can be very simple or extremely complex, but it should be "in the pocket" and grooving at all times. In the words of Bootsy Collins "One nation under a groove y'all." Here are some recordings and bassists that should give you some funky inspiration:

Artist/Group	Recording	Label	Bassist
Brecker Brothers	*The Brecker Brothers*	Atlantic	Will Lee
James Brown	*J.B. on C.D. Vols. 1 & 2*	Polydor	Bernard Odum, Tim Drummond, Various
Tim Cameo	*Machismo*	Polygram	Various
Ray Charles	*Greatest Hits*	Atlantic	Various
Earth, Wind and Fire	*Gratitude*	Columbia	Verdine White
Marvin Gaye	*Anthology*	Motown	James Jamerson
Herbie Hancock	*Headhunters*	Columbia	Paul Jackson
Brothers Johnson	*Greatest Hits*	A & M	Louis Johnson
Level 42	*Level 42*	Polydor	Mark King
Parliament	*Greatest Hits*	Polygram	Bootsy Collins, Various
Jaco Pastorius	*Jaco Pastorius*	Epic	Jaco Pastorius
Various	*Atlantic Records Anthology*	Atlantic	Duck Dunn, Various
Various	*The History of Funk*	Rhino	Various
Red Hot Chili Peppers	*Freakey Styley*	EMI	Flea
Sly & the Family Stone	*Greatest Hits*	Epic	Larry Graham
Stevie Wonder	*Musicaqaurium*	Motown	Nathan Watts, Various
The Meters	*Anthology*	Rhino	George Porter
Tower of Power	*Tower of Power*	Warner	Rocco Prestia



Chapter 6

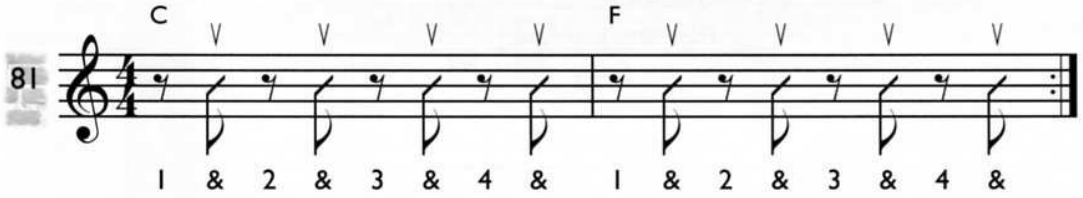
Reggae

Reggae music's origins can be traced to the island of Jamaica during the late 1960s. It is a mix of Caribbean folk songs, American R&B and African *polyrhythms* (two or more different rhythms being played simultaneously), blended together to create a unique style of music. Reggae is now an international style and its hypnotic rhythm is used in virtually all styles of music. Artists as diverse as Bonnie Raitt and Stevie Wonder have done the "reggae." The worldwide popularity of reggae is good news for bassists because of its important role in the music. A deep, resonant bass line is the "heartbeat" of reggae music.

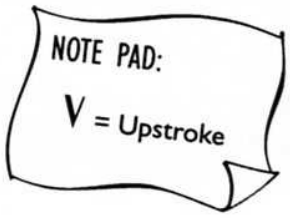
Reggae bass lines are very prominent and many tunes are built around them. The bass patterns are very melodic and often rhythmically complex. In this style, bass lines, and often bass drum patterns, sometimes avoid the first beat of each measure. This pattern is called the "one drop."

A Note to Bassists

With all this syncopation, playing reggae for the first time can be a little confusing. But don't worry *mon*, you can do it! All you need to do is focus on the guitar part in reggae. The guitar is the time keeper in reggae. Most reggae guitar parts are built on the offbeats of every measure. Here's what a typical reggae guitar rhythm looks like:



If you focus on the guitar part, you'll always know where the beat is. Also, listening to reggae is the best way to help you understand the nuances of this style.

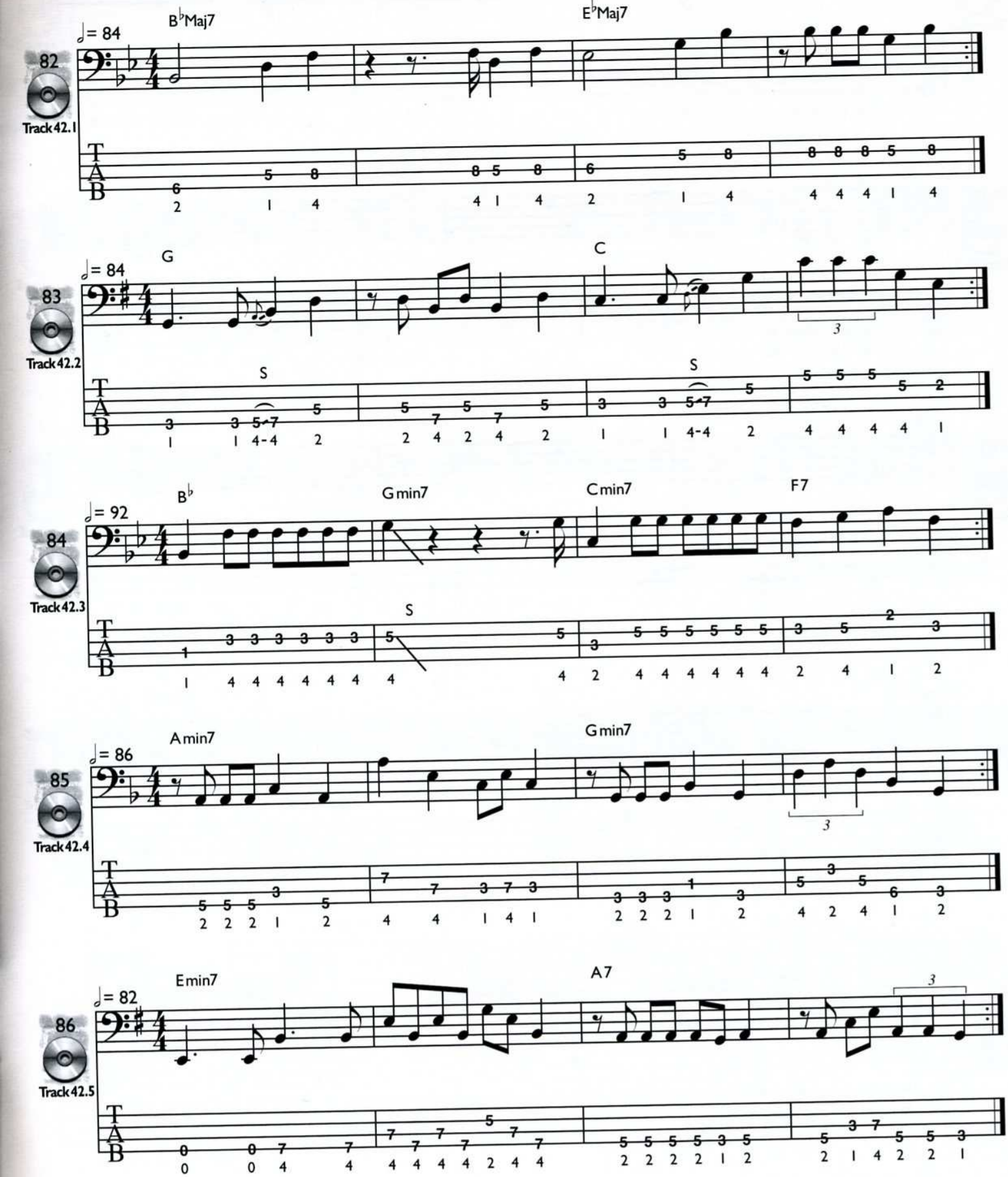


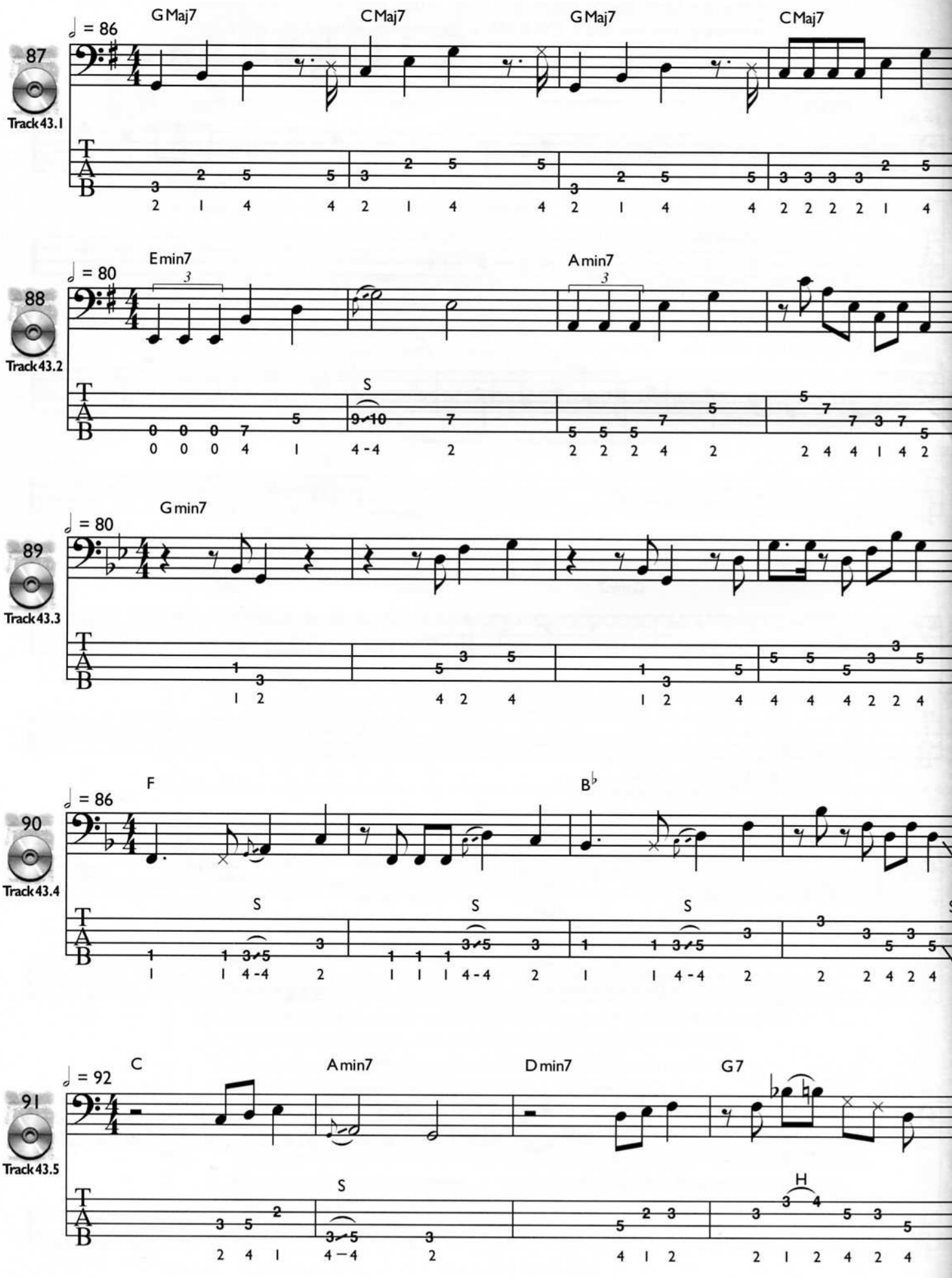
Here's a list of general reggae bass characteristics:

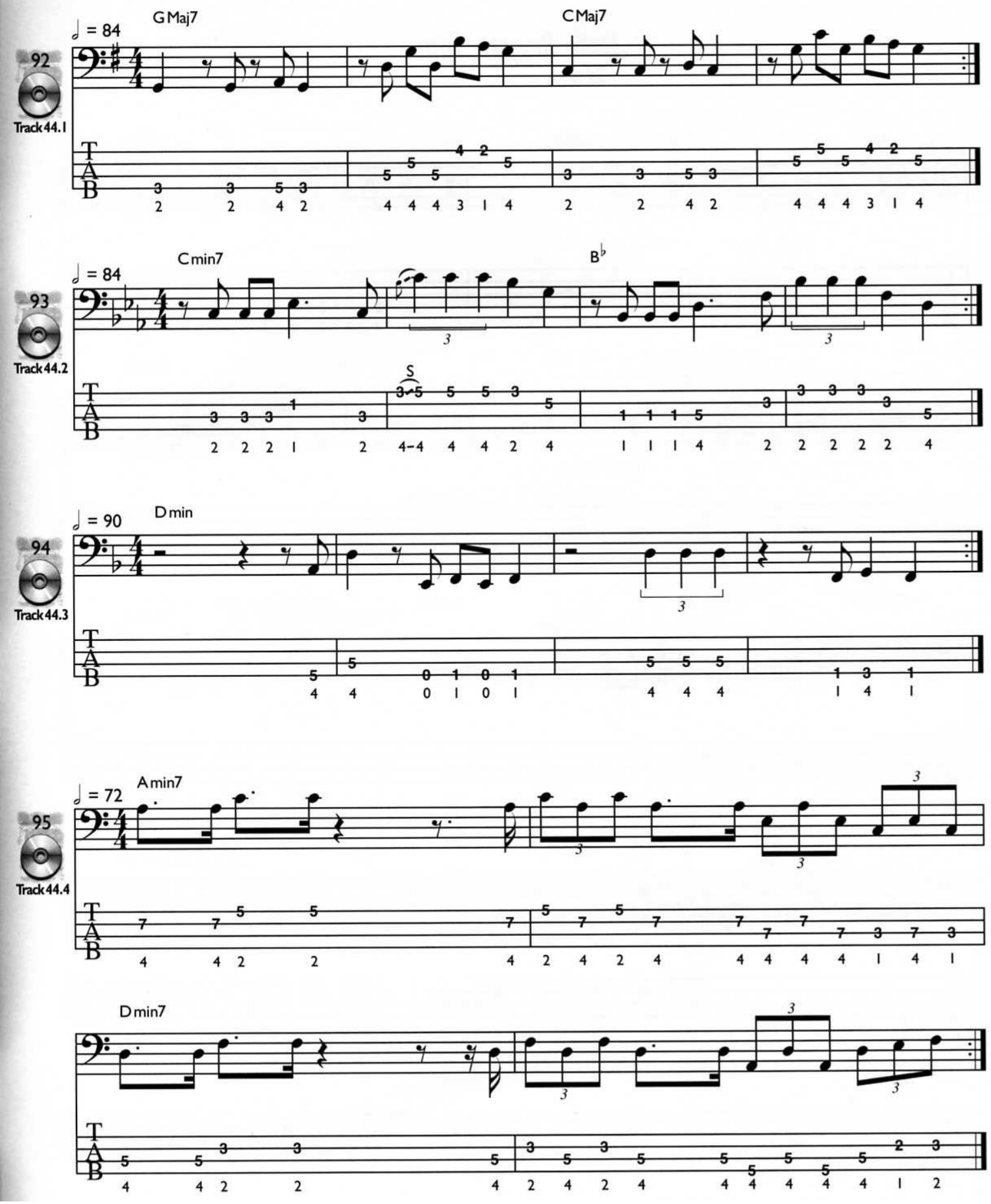
1. **Repetitive, melodic patterns. Pick a groove and stay on it!**
2. **Patterns are built around triads and stepwise motion.**
3. **Lay back! Reggae bass lines should not sound rushed.**
4. **Use syncopation and rhythmic variation.**
5. **Use muted notes for variation.**
6. **Slower tempos, ♩= 72 - 92 are prominent. Although written in common time, it is often best to think of reggae as having two slow beats per measure.**
7. **Playing off the downbeat is important. Always know where beat one is, but don't play on it!**

Now, start laying down some roots *riddum* and stir it up!

Below are some typical reggae bass lines. Make sure you play the rhythms accurately. The bass line is CRUCIAL in reggae music. Have fun and groove!

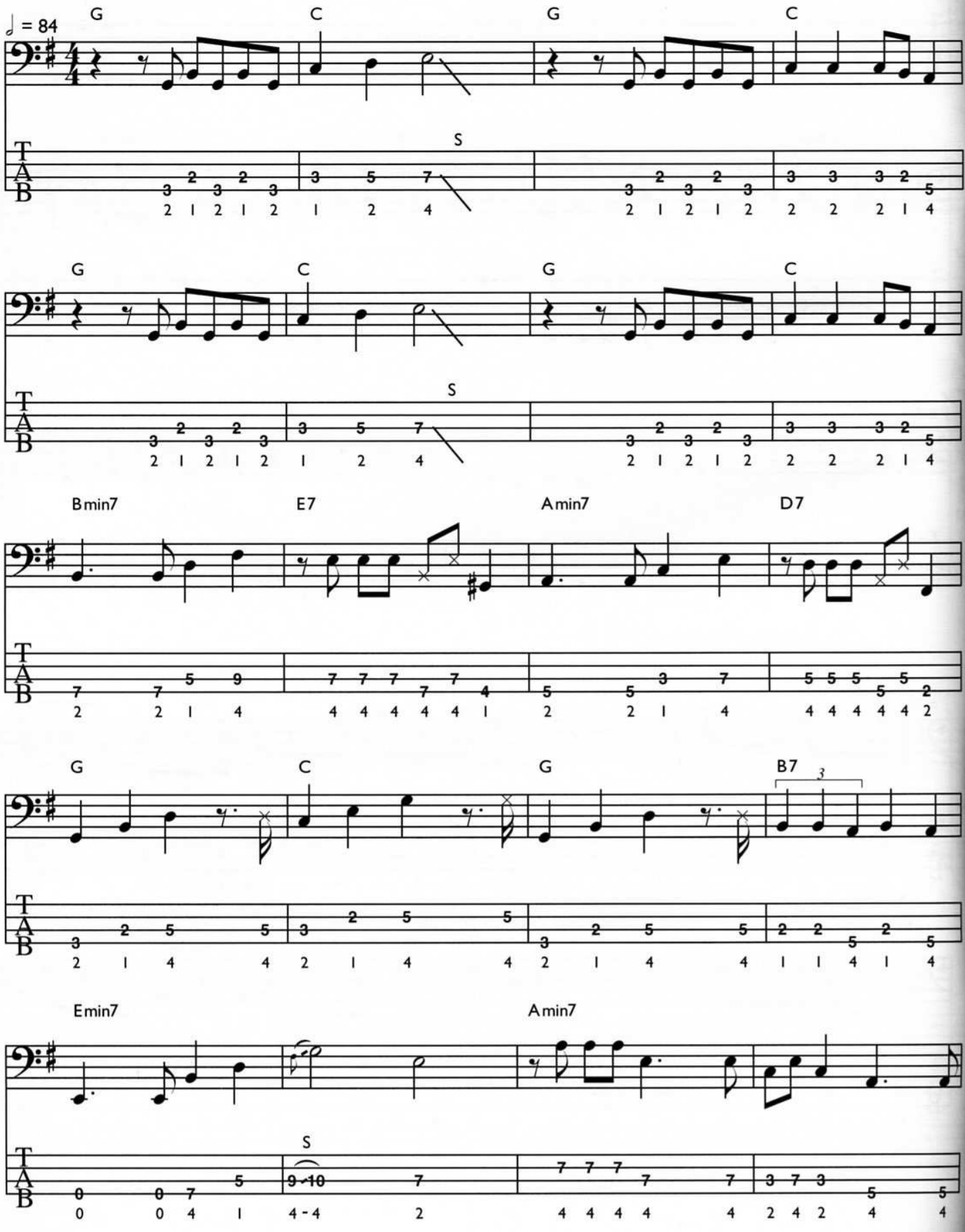


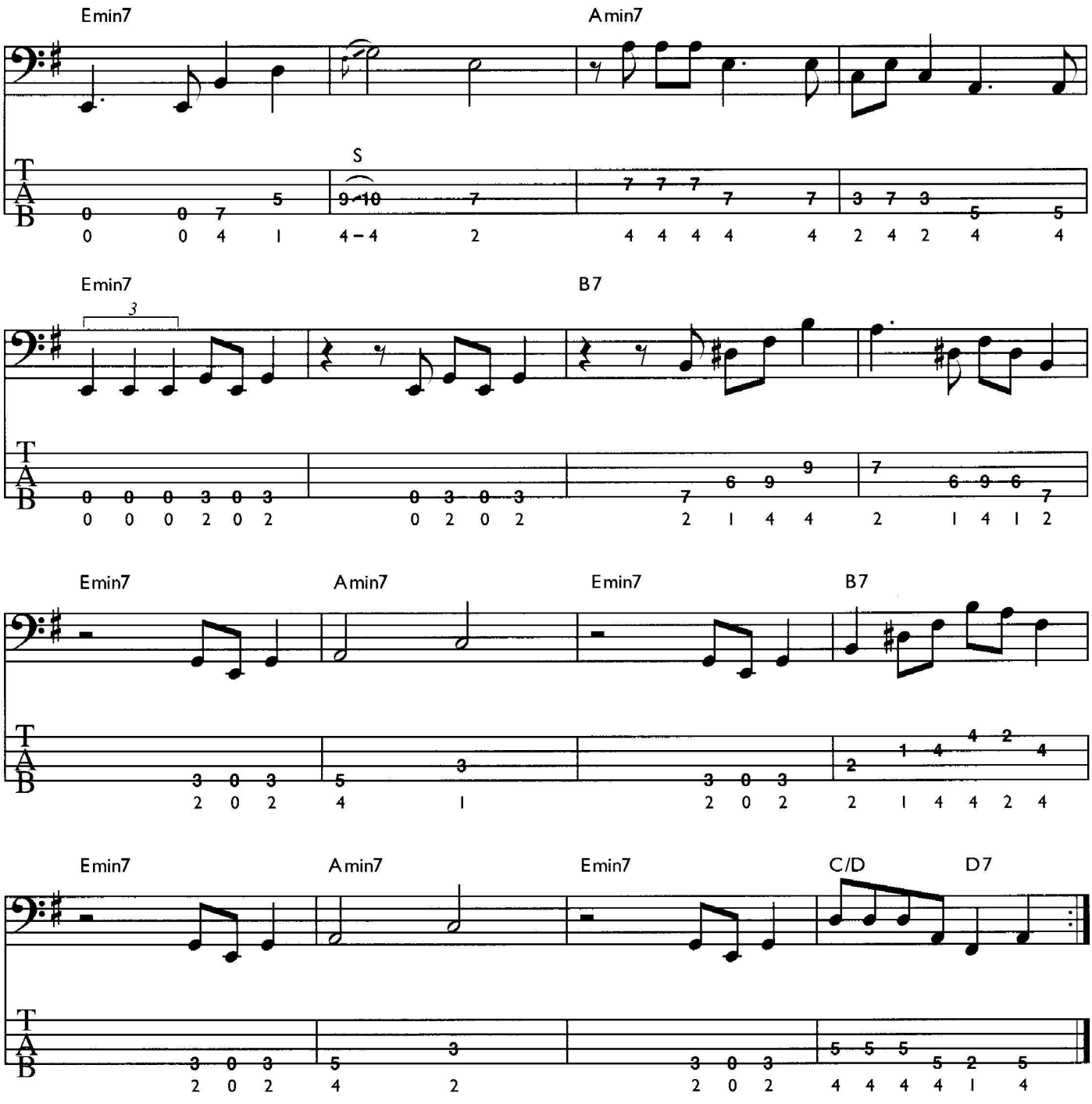

87
Track 43.1
♩ = 86
GMaj7
CMaj7
GMaj7
CMaj7
88
Track 43.2
♩ = 80
Emin7
Amin7
S
89
Track 43.3
♩ = 80
Gmin7
90
Track 43.4
♩ = 86
F
B♭
S
S
S
91
Track 43.5
♩ = 92
C
Amin7
Dmin7
G7
S
H


92
Track 44.1
♩ = 84
GMaj7
CMaj7
93
Track 44.2
♩ = 84
Cmin7
B♭
S
94
Track 44.3
♩ = 90
Dmin
95
Track 44.4
♩ = 72
Amin7
Dmin7
T
A
B

Reggae Tune

Track 45




Emin7
Amin7
S
Emin7
B7
3
Emin7
Amin7
Emin7
B7
Emin7
Amin7
Emin7
C/D
D7
T
A
B

Reggae Summary & Discography

Reggae bass lines are very prominent and are considered to be the "heartbeat" of reggae music. Reggae bass lines can be very syncopated and often avoid the first beat of each measure. A good reggae bass line should always sound relaxed and maintain a constant pulse. Here are some reggae recordings that should help you get in an island mood. Reggae on!

Artist/Group	Recording	Label
Black Uhuru	*Red*	Island/Mango
Jimmy Cliff	*The Harder They Come*	Mango
Gregory Isaacs	*Night Nurse*	Island/Mango
Toots and the Maytals	*The Best of Toots*	Trojan
Bob Marley and the Wailers	*Legend*	Island
Lee "Scratch" Perry	*Reggae Greats*	Mango
Shabba Ranks	*As Raw As Ever*	CBS
Sly and Robbie	*Reggae Greats*	Mango
Steel Pulse	*Earth Crisis*	Elektra
The Itals	*Give Me Power*	Nighthawk
Third World	*Reggae Greats*	Island
Various Artists	*The King Kong Compilation*	Mango
Various	*This is Reggae Vols. 1-5*	Mango
Various	*Reggae Hits Vols. 1-16*	Jetstar
Yellowman	*King Yellowman*	Columbia

Bassists you should check out:

Aston "Family Man" Barrett
Robbie Shakespeare
Val Douglas
Bertram McLean
Lloyd Parks
Errol (Flabba) Holt

Chapter 7

Ska

Ska music originated in Jamaica in the early 1960s and is the predecessor to reggae. Ska was originally conceived as Jamaican styles combined with jazz and R&B from the United States. Throughout the 1970s, '80s and '90s however, ska music has been combined with many styles including rock, punk, new wave and thrash. These contemporary versions have contributed to the evolution and popularity of this unique style.

Ska music should be thought of as having (so far) two periods, early and contemporary. The early ska period encompasses the 1960s to the mid-1970s. The contemporary ska period ranges from the 1980s to the present.

Early ska was primarily an instrumental style and was pioneered by a group called The Skatalites. The Skatalites used a typical rhythm section (piano, guitar, bass and drums) and a horn section (trumpet, trombone and saxophone). This lineup continues to be used in contemporary ska bands. Because ska music preceded reggae, you may hear some similarities. The use of the guitar upbeats and the chord progressions are similar in both styles. There are differences, however, especially in the bass lines. Early ska bassists used the acoustic bass. Naturally, this affected the sound and function of the bass in this style. Keep that in mind when you are playing early ska tunes—your slap and pop electric bass techniques would be out of place!

Early ska style bass line characteristics:

1. **Tempos range from ♩ = 116 to 140.**
2. **Patterns are often built on triads and step movement (very similar to early R&B bass lines).**
3. **Patterns tend to be repetitive and are not as rhythmically complex as reggae bass lines.**
4. **Ska bass lines are not as prominent as reggae bass lines.**
5. **Acoustic bass was prevalent.**

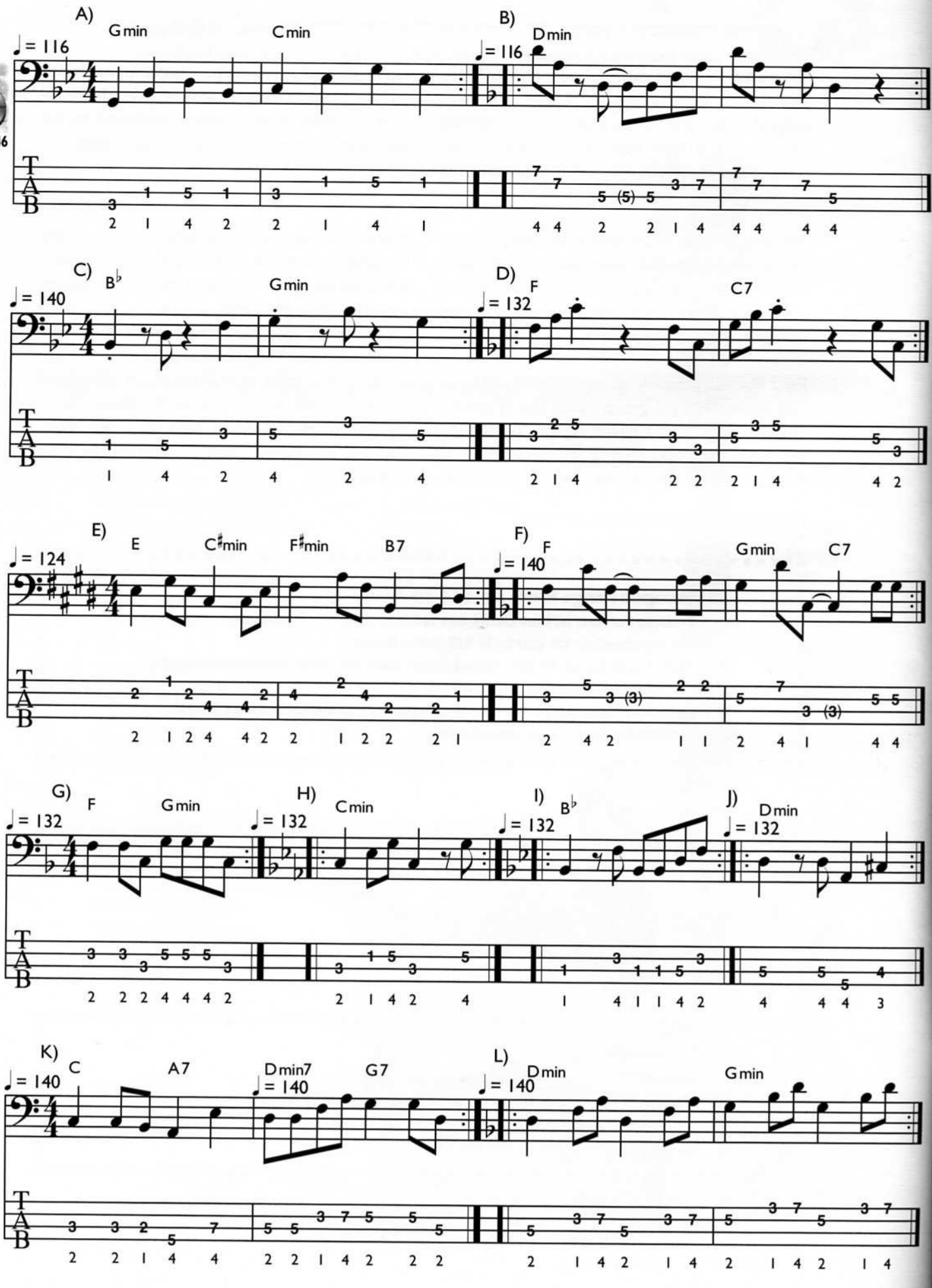
Contemporary ska music encompasses many styles and influences that have greatly changed the role of ska bass lines. Contemporary ska bass lines are usually played on the electric bass and are much more prominent. These bass lines can be very challenging simply because of the increased tempos.

Contemporary ska style bass line characteristics:

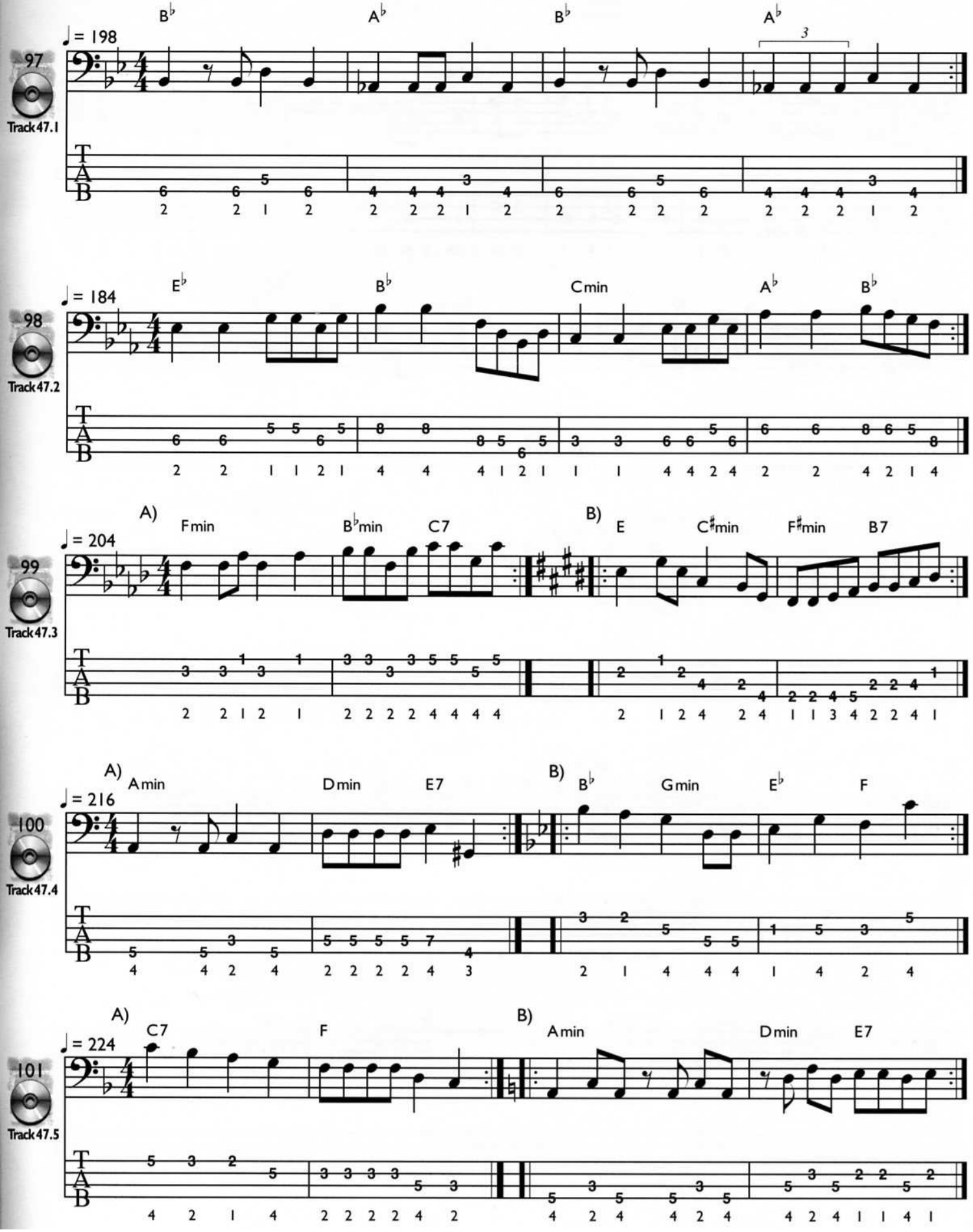
1. **Tempos range from ♩ =160 to 240!**
2. **Has more of a rock edge.**
3. **Patterns are not as repetitive as the early style.**
4. **Electric bass is prevalent.**
5. **Harmonies are less diatonic.**

Early Ska Bass Patterns

96
Track 46

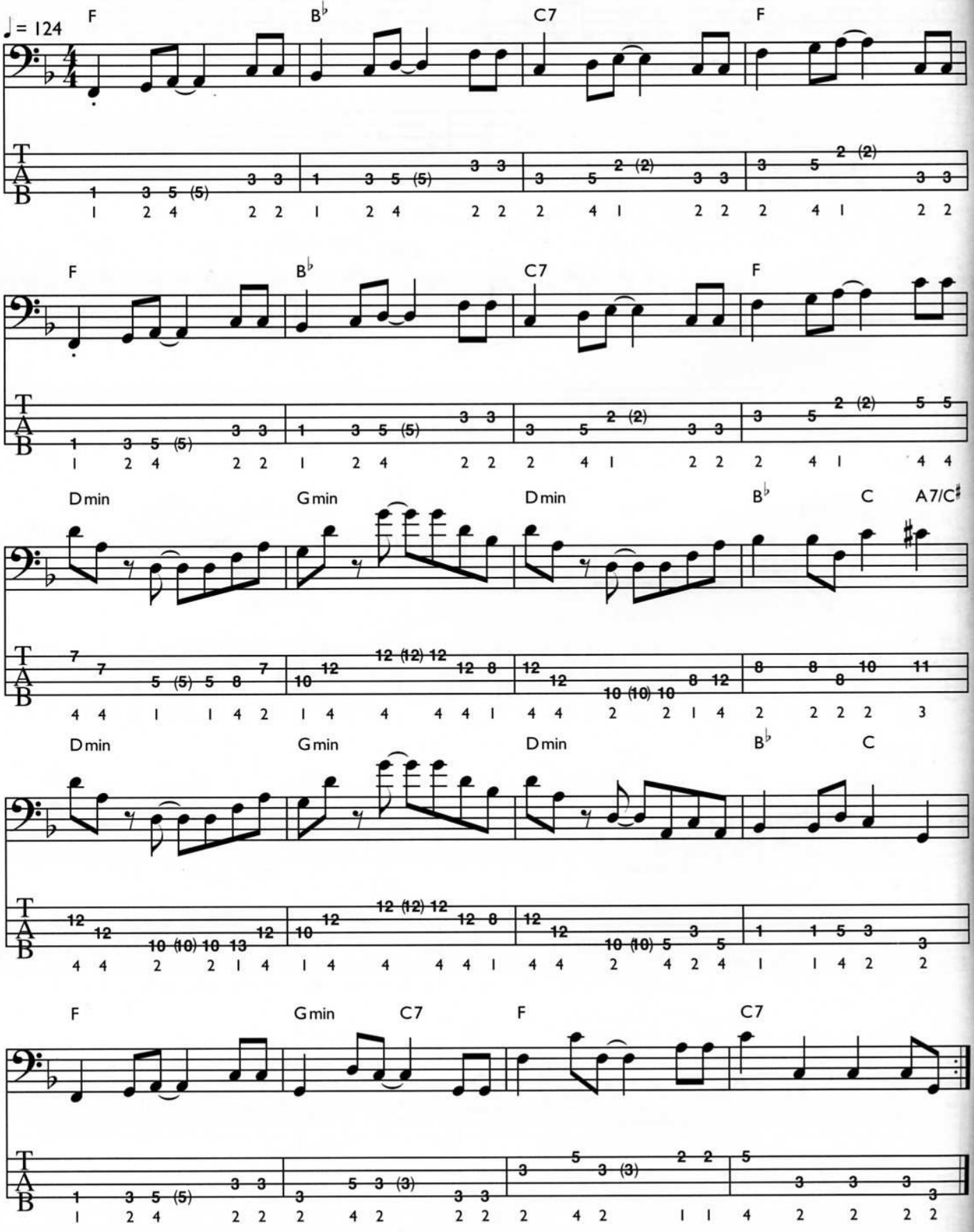


Contemporary Ska Bass Patterns



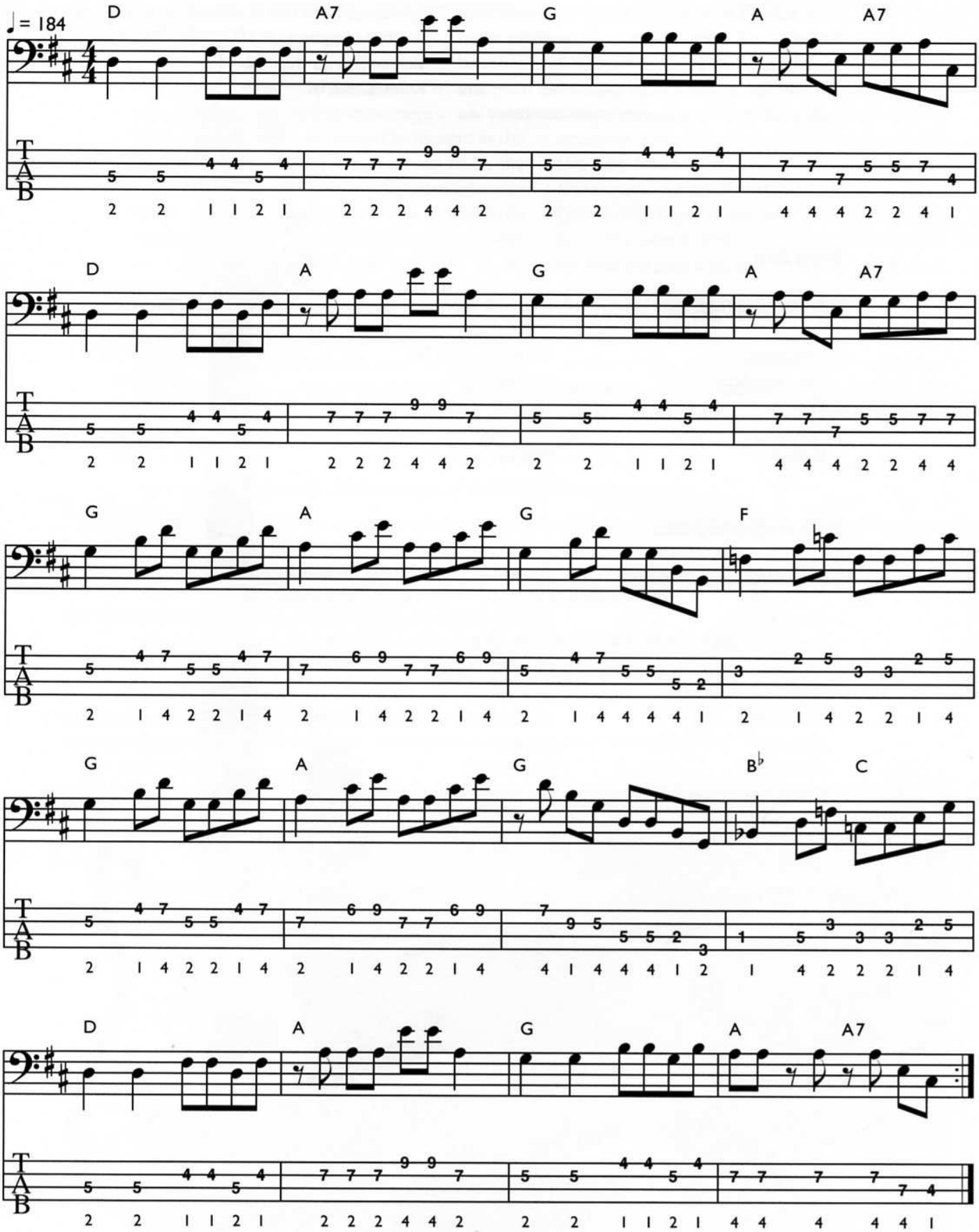
Early Ska Tune

Track 48



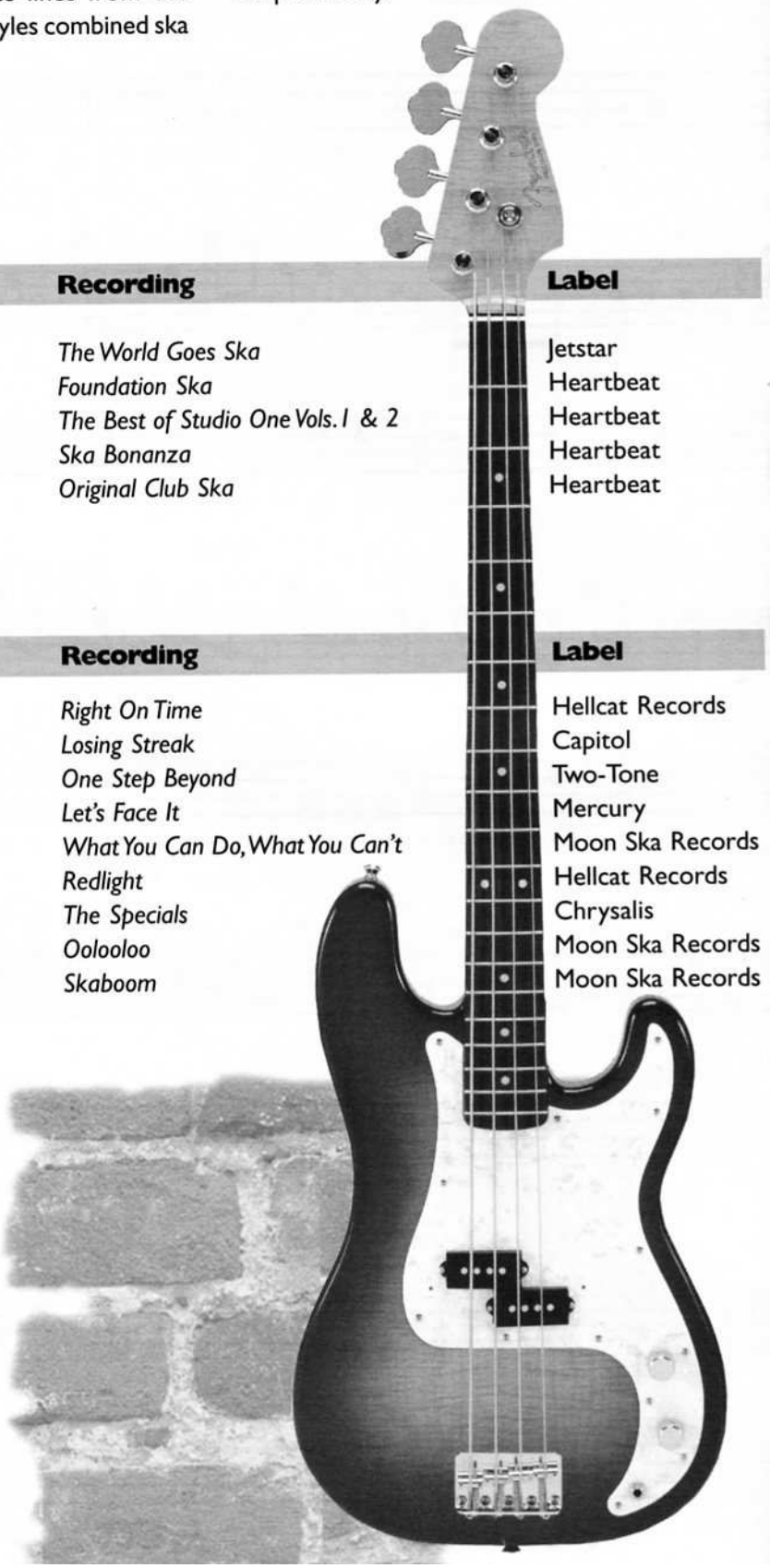
Track 49

Contemporary Ska Tune



Ska Summary & Discography

Ska is a musical style that originated in Jamaica in the early 1960s and has since become an international style. There are two styles associated with ska, early and contemporary. Early styles often used the acoustic bass and the bass lines sounded very similar to early rock bass lines from the United States. Contemporary styles combined ska with other styles including punk and funk. Contemporary ska bass lines can be very syncopated and can be difficult to play because of the fast tempos. (♩ = 180-240!). Here are some ska recordings that should get you in a ska mood. Keep it steady!



Early Ska

Artist/Group	Recording	Label
Ethiopians	*The World Goes Ska*	Jetstar
The Skatalites	*Foundation Ska*	Heartbeat
Various	*The Best of Studio One Vols. 1 & 2*	Heartbeat
Various	*Ska Bonanza*	Heartbeat
Various	*Original Club Ska*	Heartbeat

Contemporary Ska

Artist/Group	Recording	Label
Hepcat	*Right On Time*	Hellcat Records
Less Than Jake	*Losing Streak*	Capitol
Madness	*One Step Beyond*	Two-Tone
Mighty, Mighty Bosstones	*Let's Face It*	Mercury
Skinnerbox	*What You Can Do, What You Can't*	Moon Ska Records
Slackers	*Redlight*	Hellcat Records
The Specials	*The Specials*	Chrysalis
The Pietasters	*Oolooloo*	Moon Ska Records
Toasters	*Skaboom*	Moon Ska Records

Chapter 8

Soca

Soca music comes from the island of Trinidad and is a mixture of two distinct styles: calypso and soul/funk music. Calypso originated in Trinidad in the nineteenth century and is considered to be the country's folk music. It is partying, carnival music that is often associated with Trinidad's steel drum bands. Soca began in the 1970s when calypso was combined with American soul and funk music. Soca is an abbreviation for "soul-calypso" and its upbeat dance groove has brought it worldwide attention. One of the most popular soca tunes is *Hot, Hot, Hot* originally recorded by Arrow and later covered by American singer Buster Poindexter. If you've heard either recording, you know that soca is very groove-oriented music and the bass line plays a big part in creating that groove!

Soca bass lines are very prominent and have a strong rhythmic and melodic feel. In fact, most soca tunes are built around the bass line. Because of the American funk/soul influence, many soca bass lines may sound familiar to those of you that have already checked out the funk section of this book. Soca is dance music that often uses a drum machine, so you bassists out there must make sure your bass lines are precise and rhythmically accurate.

Here are some general characteristics of soca style bass lines:

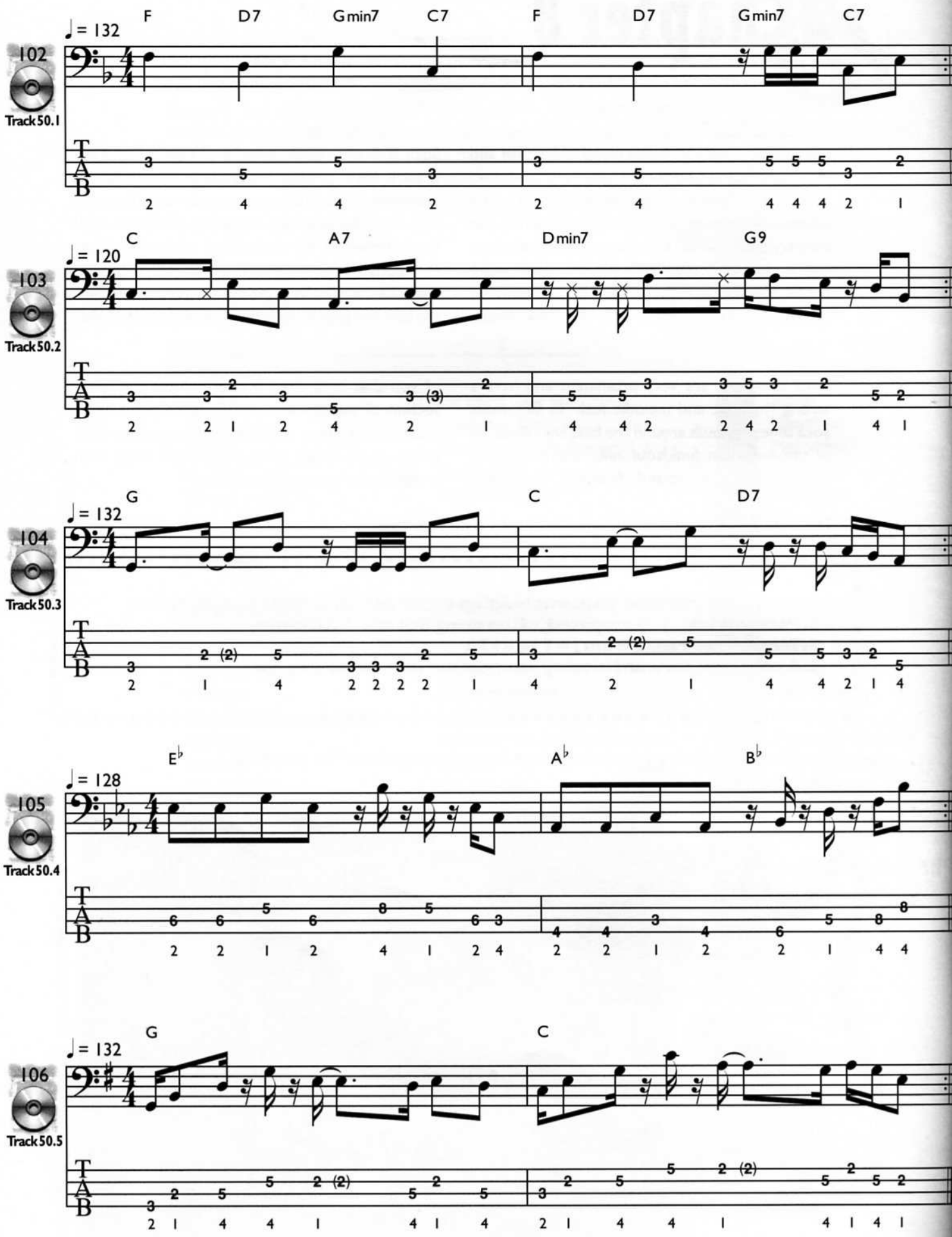
1. Repetitive, melodic patterns built on triads and chromatic passing notes.
2. Patterns highly syncopated, often using 8th and 16th notes.
3. Tempos can range from ♩ = 110 - 150.
4. A constant, forward moving momentum that never lets up!

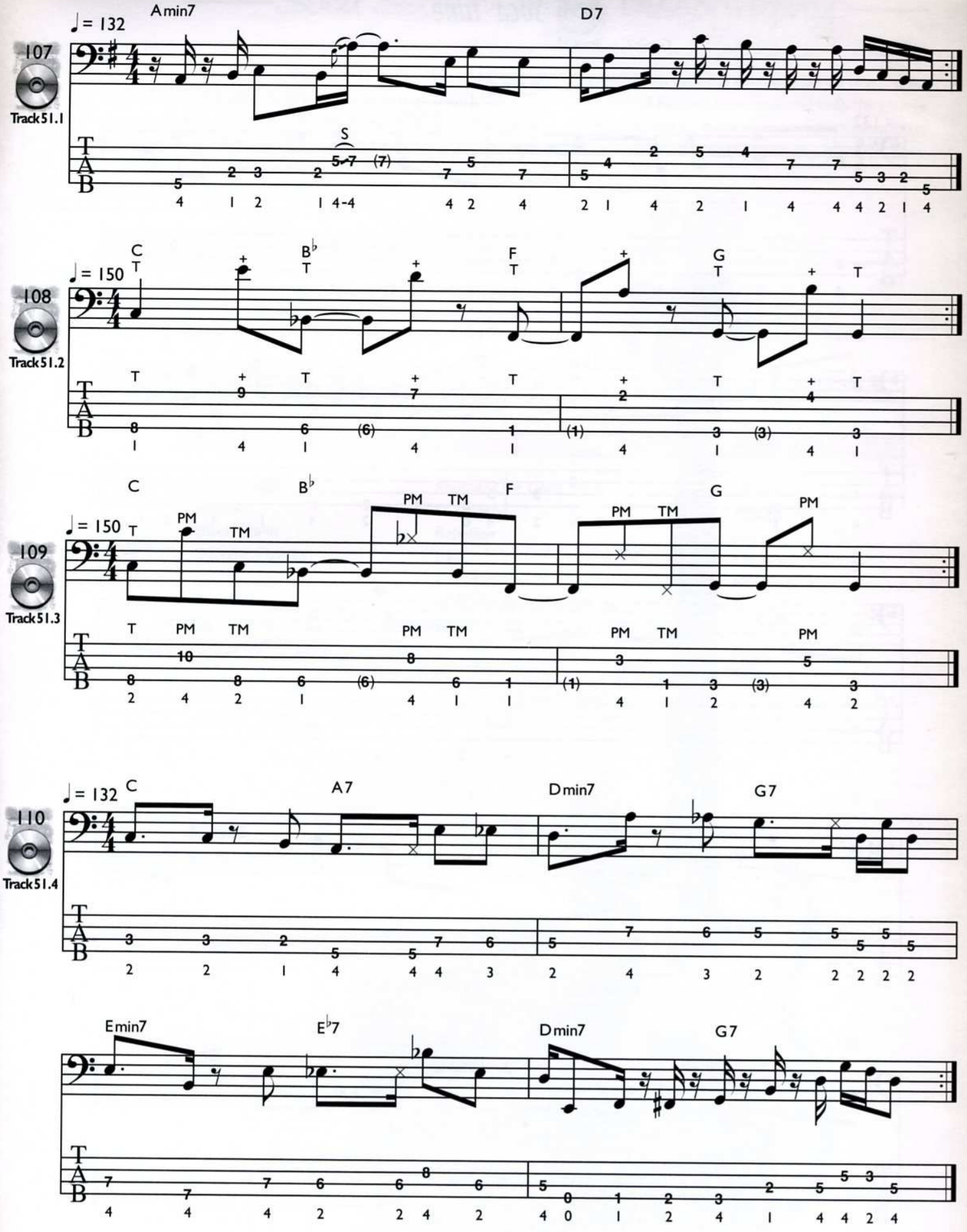
You are now ready to create some serious, carnival soca grooves. Hot, Hot, Hot!

Banshees of Blue

featuring ***Buster Poindexter*** *(second from left), had a big hit in 1987 with* ***Hot, Hot, Hot,*** *a soca tune and one of the great party anthems of all time.*

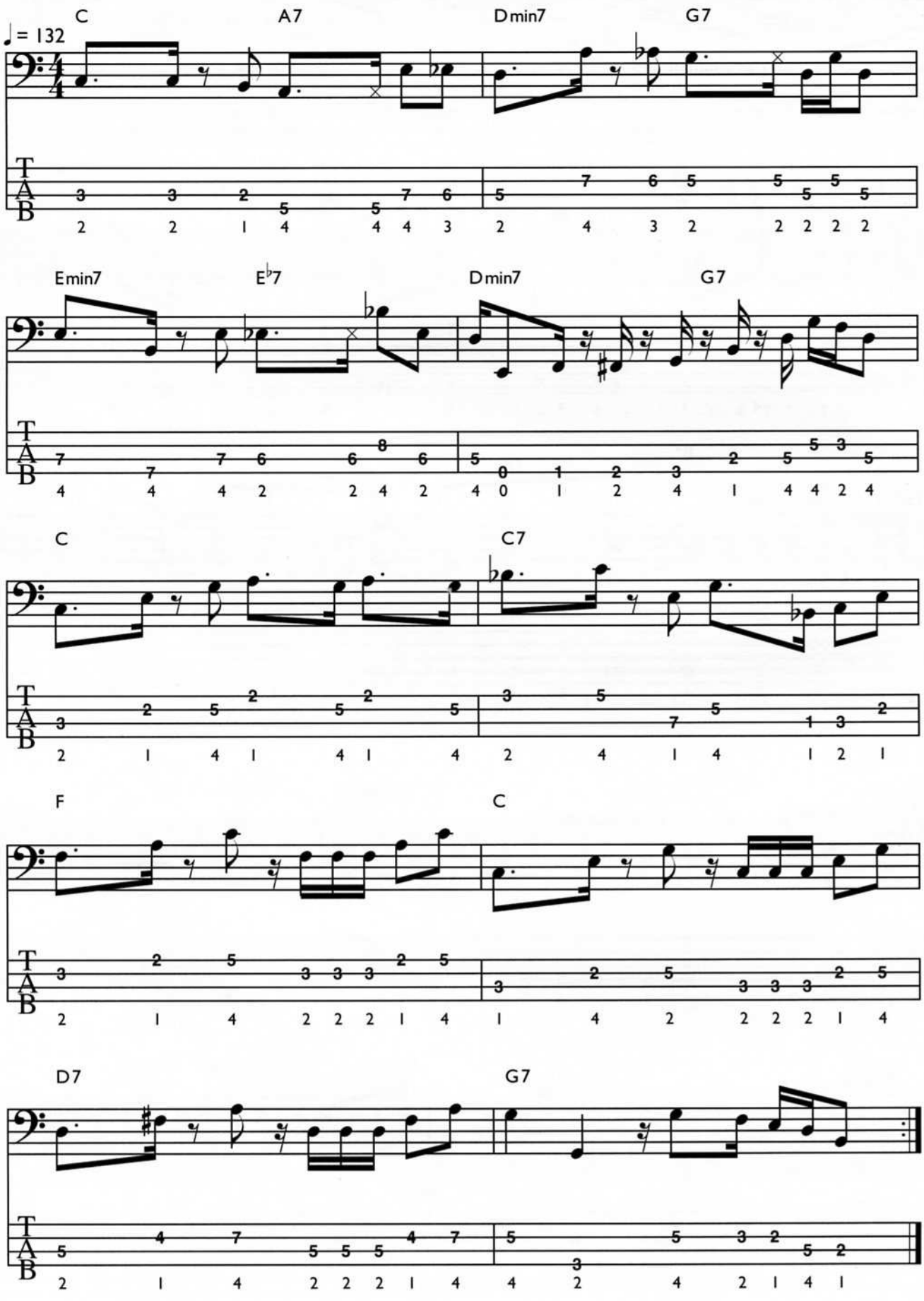
PHOTO CREDIT BOB GRUEN / COURTESY OF STAR FILE,INC.


F D7 Gmin7 C7 F D7 Gmin7 C7
♩= 132
102
Track 50.1
C A7 Dmin7 G9
♩= 120
103
Track 50.2
G C D7
♩= 132
104
Track 50.3
E♭ A♭ B♭
♩= 128
105
Track 50.4
G C
♩= 132
106
Track 50.5


♩= 132
Amin7
D7
107
Track51.1
S
♩= 150
C
B♭
F
G
108
Track51.2
C
B♭
F
G
♩= 150
PM
TM
109
Track51.3
♩= 132
C
A7
Dmin7
G7
110
Track51.4
Emin7
E♭7
Dmin7
G7

Soca Tune

Track 52



Soca Summary & Discography

Soca music is a style that comes from the island of Trinidad. It is a mix of soul music from the U.S. and calypso music from Trinidad. Soca bass lines are very prominent and can be very syncopated. Because soca music is primarily dance music, bass lines should be very consistent and keep the groove moving forward. Here are some soca recordings to help you create some excellent island grooves.

Artist/Group	Recording	Label
Safi Abdullah	*Another One Gone*	Shanachie
Arrow	*O' La Soca*	Mango
Black Stalin	*Rebellion*	Ice
Burning Flames	*Dig*	Mango
Andy Narell	*The Hammer*	Hip Pocket
Nelson	*When The World Turns*	Shanachie
Singing Francine	*This is Singing Francine*	Red Bullet
The Heart of Steel	*Steelbands of Trinidad*	Flying Fish
Various	*Soca Breakdown*	Straker's
Various	*Soca Music From Trinidad*	Rounder
Various	*This is Soca*	Oval

Chapter 9

Reviewing the Basics

If you have turned to this chapter, you probably felt that a little review is in order. No Problem! You've come to the right place. If you start here and continue through to page 95, you'll be ready to conquer the rest of the material in this book.

The Musical Alphabet

Learning to read music doesn't have to be intimidating. Armed with your instrument and a little patience, you can do it! Just remember that a *whole step* equals a distance of two frets on the bass and a *half step* equals a distance of one fret. All notes are separated by either a whole step or a half step.

Natural notes with a whole step, or two frets, between them are: **A-B, C-D, D-E, F-G** and **G-A**. The notes with a half step, or one fret, between them are **B-C** and **E-F.**

NOTE PAD:
W = Whole Ste
H = Half Step

Notes: A B C D E F G A

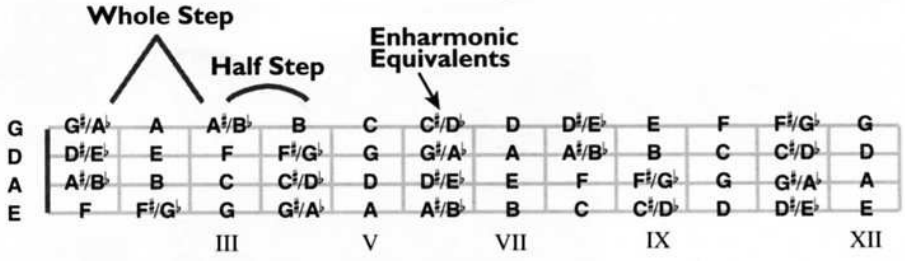
Steps: W H W W H W W

Natural notes that are a whole step apart have a *chromatic* note in between: a *sharp* ♯ or a flat ♭. Notice that chromatic notes can have two names.

For instance, C♯ and D♭ fall on the same fret and sound the same. These are called *enharmonic equivalents.*

A A♯/B♭ B C C♯/D♭ D D♯/E♭ E F F♯/G♭ G G♯/A♭ A

The Bass Fingerboard



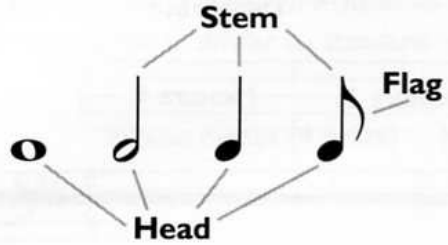
Roman Numerals

Here is a review of Roman numerals and their Arabic equivalents.

I or i = 1	IV or iv = 4	VII or vii = 7	X or x = 10
II or ii = 2	V or vi = 5	VIII or viii = 8	XI or xi = 11
III or iii = 3	VI or vii = 6	IX or ix = 9	XII or xii = 12

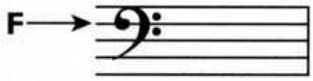
Notes

Pitch refers to the highness or lowness of musical sounds called *notes*. Pitch is indicated by placing notes on a *staff*. Notes appear in various ways. Every note has a *head* and some have *stems* and *flags*.



The Staff and Clef

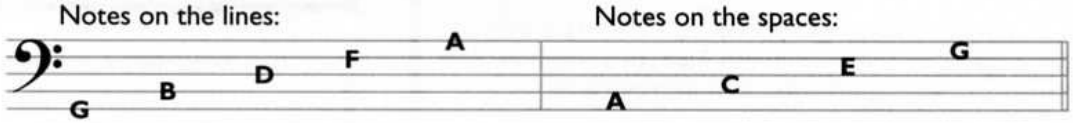
The staff has five lines and four spaces and is read from left to right. At the beginning of the staff is a clef. The clef indicates which note corresponds to a particular line or space on the staff. Bass music is written in *bass clef* 𝄢 which is sometimes called the *F clef*. The dots surround the F line.



Notes on the Staff

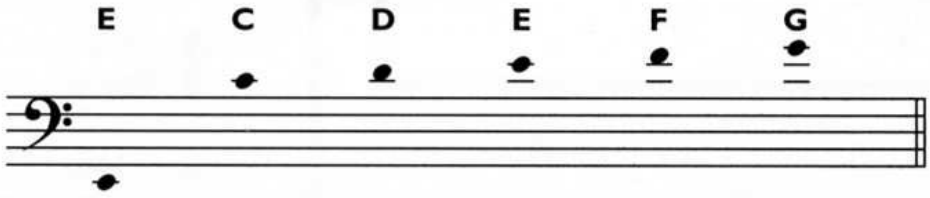
A good way to learn the notes on the staff is to consider the notes on the lines and spaces separately. Here they are, starting from the bottom line and then the bottom space. To help you memorize them, a catchy phrase is suggested for each group of notes.

Bass Clef Line Names: G B D F A (Good Boys Do Fine Always)
Bass Clef Space Names: A C E G (All Cows Eat Grass)



Ledger Lines

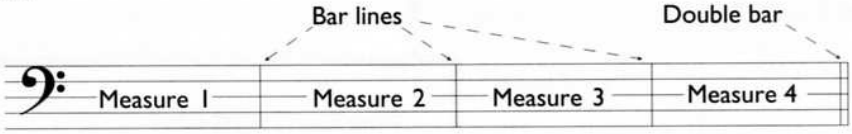
Lines that are located above or below the staff are called *ledger lines*. (Sometimes spelled leger.) They are an extension of the staff and are used when notes occur that are too high or too low to be accommodated within the staff itself.



Reading Music — Time

Measures

Measures divide music into groups of *beats*. A beat is an equal division of time. Beats are the basic pulse behind music. The vertical lines that cross through the staff below are called *bar lines*. They show where one measure begins and another ends. *Double bars* mark the end of a section or small example.



Note Durations

As you know, the location of a note in relation to the staff tells us its pitch (how high or low it is). The duration, or value, is indicated by its shape and stem.

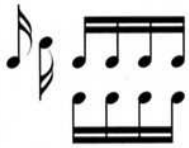
A whole note is the largest value.

A half note is ½ the value of a whole note. Two half notes equal one whole note.

A quarter note is ½ the value of a half note and ¼ the value of a whole note. Two quarter notes equal one half note. Four quarter notes equal a whole note.

An eighth note is ½ the value of a quarter note. Two eighth notes equal one quarter note. Eight eighth notes equal one whole note.

When two or more eighth notes appear consecutively, they are beamed together.



A sixteenth note lasts ¼ beat. Consequtive sixteenth notes are beamed together.

Rests

So far we've covered five types of note values. They each have a corresponding duration of silence known as a *rest*. A *whole rest* means four beats of silence, a *half rest* means two beats of silence.

 = whole rest

 = half rest

= quarter rest

= eighth note

= sixteenth rest

Time Signatures

At the beginning of any piece or song, you'll find a *time signature*. A time signature consists of two numbers, one on top of the other, which looks like a fraction. The top number indicates how many beats are in a measure. The bottom number tells you what kind of note gets one count.

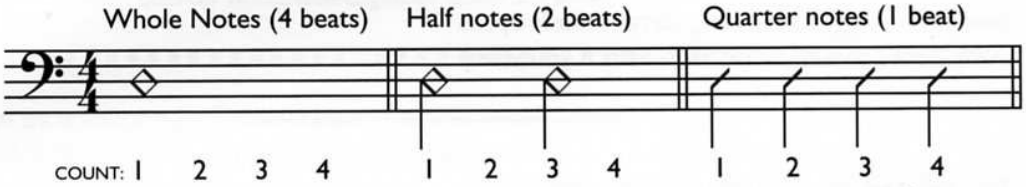
4 4 beats per measure
4 Quarter note ♩ = one beat

3 3 beats per measure
4 Quarter note ♩ = one beat

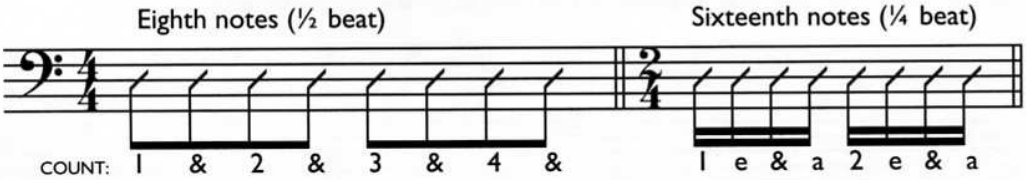
Rhythmic Notation

Another type of notation used frequently in guitar music is called *rhythmic notation.* It is a system of slash marks and beams that indicate specific rhythms without specific pitch. This notation is usually used to indicate the rhythm to be played for the chord written above the staff. The notation is similar to standard notation.

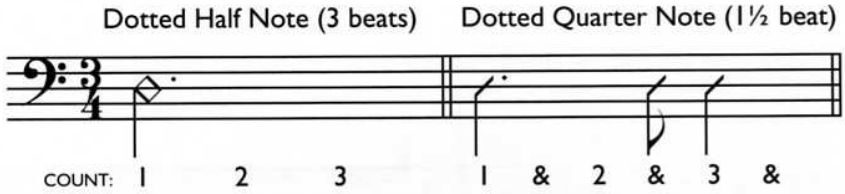
Counting syllables are used to describe parts of a beat. When we break a beat in half, we use numbers for the first half and the "&" sign for the second half. When we subdivide beats into four parts we use an "e" for the second part and an "ah" for the fourth, for example, "1 e & ah" (said "one-ee-and-ah").



Connecting notes that are less than one beat in duration is called *beaming.*

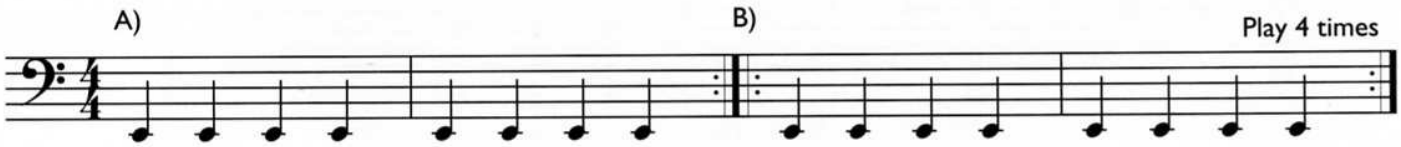


A dot increases the length of a note by one-half of its original value.



Repeat Signs
Repeat signs look like this:

Repeat signs indicate that the music between them should be played a second time. If the example or song is meant to be repeated from the beginning, the left repeat sign is not needed (see example A below). Sometimes, it may be desirable to repeat a specific portion more than once (see example B below).

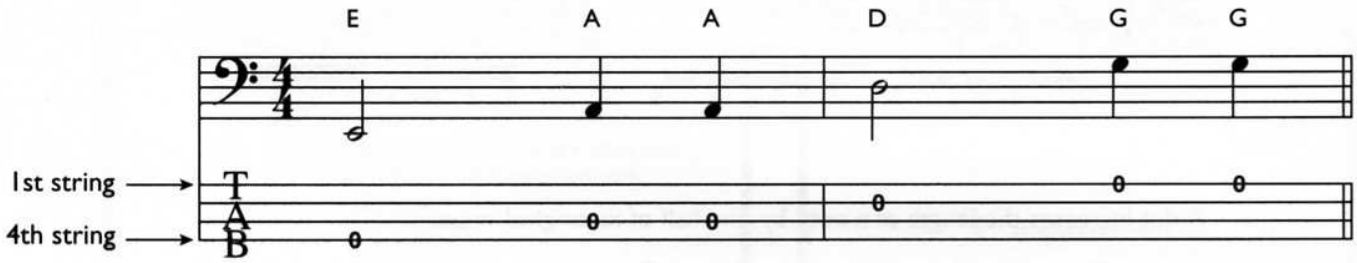


Tablature

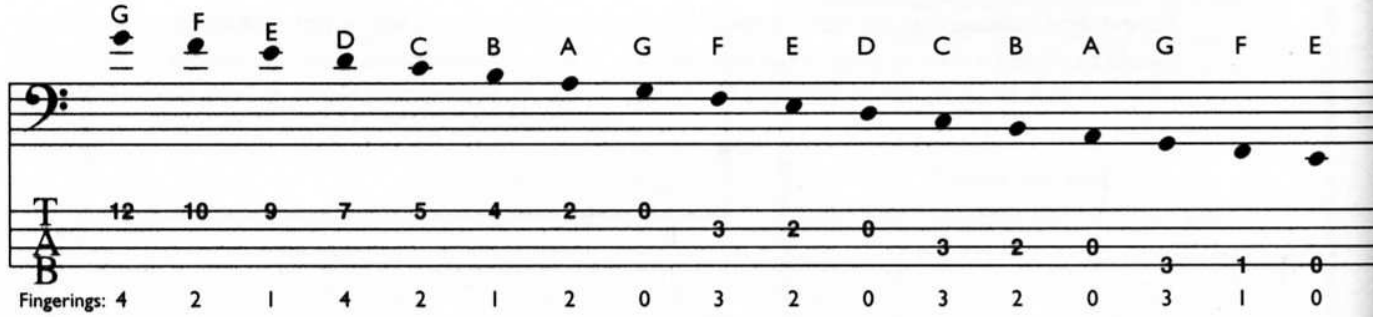
Tablature, when combined with standard notation, provides the most complete system for communicating the many possibilities in bass guitar playing.

Tablature can be helpful to a novice player (especially if you're working without a teacher). But as time goes on, you should break away from reading TAB to reading standard notation. The most obvious benefit is that of being able to read music at sight. The ability to read music opens many doors to a musician, especially if you want to work as a freelancer. On 99% of these gigs, a book of music is placed on your stand, and you are expected to be able to read it. They will be written in either standard notation or with chord symbols (chord charts are covered on page 11).

The top line in tab is the 1st string (the string closest to the floor) and the bottom line is the 4th string. Numbers are placed on the strings to indicate frets. If there is an "O," play that string open. In the TAB system in this book, as in most, rhythm is not notated. For that you will have to refer to the standard notation. The example below shows how to refer to the standard notation for rhythms. It uses all four of the open strings.



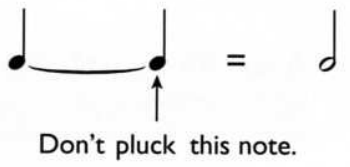
Fingerings are often included in TAB. You will find them just under the bottom line. A "1" indicates your left or index finger. A "4" indicates your 4th or pinkie finger. In the following example, the first note is on the 12th fret of the 1st string, and is played with the 4th finger. The next note is on the 10th fret of the 1st string, and is played with the 2nd finger, etc.



Ties

Tie

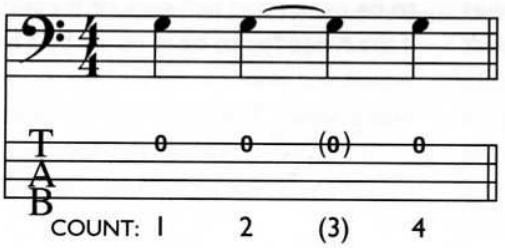
The tie is a curved line placed over two notes of the same pitch to show that they are played as one unbroken note. Think of a tie as "musical addition." The tie adds together the value of the two or more notes that are connected by the sign. For instance, a quarter note ♩ gets one beat, so two quarter notes tied together is like 1 +1 =2:



A tie is indicated in TAB by placing the tied note in parentheses. The examples below show some of the most important uses for a tie.

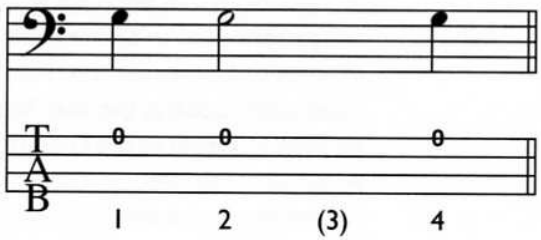
Ties within one measure:

A) This rhythm can also be written...

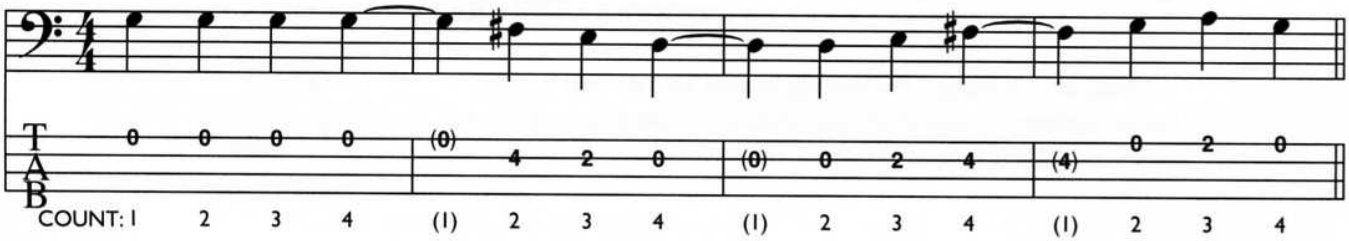


=

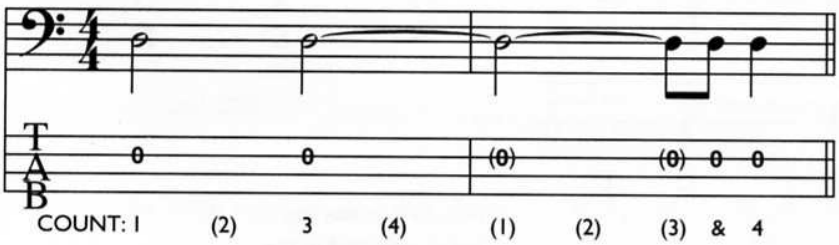
B) ...like this.



To create a longer note out of two shorter notes in different measures:



To make a note value that no single note could give:



Chapter 10

Theory

A scale is a group of notes arranged in alphabetical order. The most common scale is the major scale which contains a certain pattern of half steps and whole steps. When you hear musicians talking to each other in numbers, they are talking about notes as they relate to scales or chords.

The Major Scale

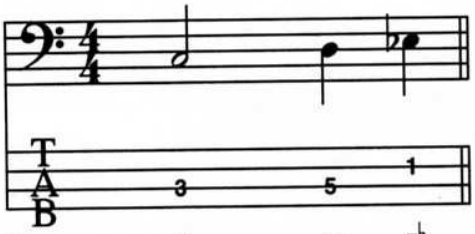
There are eight notes in a major scale, with the eighth note being an octave above the first. An octave is the distance of twelve half steps or eight scale degrees, and involves two notes with the same name, only higher or lower in pitch. The first two notes in the song *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* are an octave apart.

A major scale can begin on any note. Sometimes the pattern used to create major scales will result in notes that have sharps or flats (but never both!). Confused? Look at the bass fingerboard diagram on page 6. Observe the G on the 3rd fret and the A on the 5th fret of the 4th (lowest) string. Notice the fret between them. The 4th fret has two names. It could be called G♯ if the G needed to be raised one half step, or it could be called A♭ if the A needed to be lowered by a half step. Why would you want to do that? To make the notes fit into a scale! The first note in the scale gives the scale its name. This is the *key note*, *tonic* or *root* (R). Here is the formula for the major scale:

Scale degree:	**1(R)**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8(R)**
Step:		**W**	**W**	**H**	**W**	**W**	**W**	**H**

Notice we are using a numbering system to help you find the scale degrees. If any of those notes are altered (♭ or ♯), the number reflects, the alteration.

Here's an example:



Notes: C D E♭

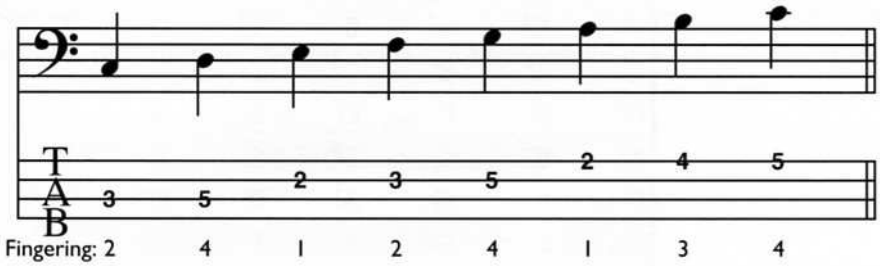
Steps: W H

Scale degree: 1 2 ♭3

Notice that the flat 3rd is reflected in the number below.

Major Scale & Key

The major scale is a series of tones arranged in a specific pattern of whole and half steps. The letter names appear in alphabetical order. Never use the same letter name twice in a row! Together, these notes comprise the key. Here is the series of notes known as the C Major scale, which comprises the key of C Major:



C Major Scale

Notice that when you start on the note C, the natural half steps of E to F and B to C fall conveniently so that no sharps or flats are needed. When the root is a note other than C, certain notes in the scale will have to be altered to bring about the correct sequence of whole steps and half steps. Let's build a D Major scale so you can practice using the major scale formula.

1. Write out

R		2		3		4		5		6		7		R
	W		**W**		**H**		**W**		**W**		**W**		**H**	

2. Since D is the root of the scale, place a D over the R at the beginning and the end. Move up a whole step (two frets). You should find an E. Place E over the 2 on your scale.

3. We need another whole step. Look again at the bass fingerboard diagram on page 6 and move a whole step up (two frets) from E. You should be on F♯. Place an F♯ over the 3.

4. Now it's time for a half step! Look at the diagram and move up a half step (one fret) from F♯. You should find a G. Place a G over the 4. The next whole step in the diagram is an A. Place this over the 5 in your scale.

5. The next whole step should be a B. B should be 6 in your scale. The next whole step (two frets) up from B is C♯. Place this over the 7 in your scale.

6. One final half step (one fret) up from C♯ is D. This completes the scale. Here is how it looks:

D	**E**	**F♯**	**G**	**A**	**B**	**C♯**	**D**
R	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**R**

Now you can write every major scale. Practice writing major scales starting on different roots.

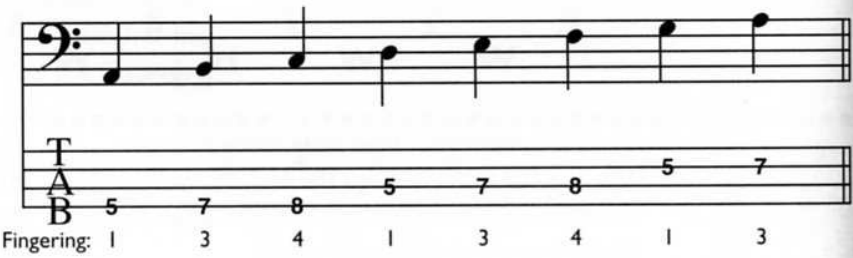
The Major Scales

R	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	
G	A	B	C	D	E	F♯	G	
D	E	F♯	G	A	B	C♯	D	
A	B	C♯	D	E	F♯	G♯	A	
E	F♯	G♯	A	B	C♯	D♯	E	
B	C♯	D♯	E	F♯	G♯	A♯	B	
F♯	G♯	A♯	B	C♯	D♯	E♯	F♯	} *enharmonic
G♭	A♭	B♭	C♭	D♭	E♭	F	G♭	
D♭	E♭	F	G♭	A♭	B♭	C	D♭	
A♭	B♭	C	D♭	E♭	F	G	A♭	
E♭	F	G	A♭	B♭	C	D	E♭	
B♭	C	D	E♭	F	G	A	B♭	
F	G	A	B♭	C	D	E	F	

* The F♯ and G♭ scales are actually all the same notes (enharmonically equivalent). It is also possible to write a C♭ Major scale which is enharmonically equivalent to B and a C♯ Major scale which is equivalent to D♭.

Natural Minor Scale

Minor scales are derived from major scales. For example, the A Minor scale is made up of the notes of the C Major scale played from A to A.



The minor scale, like the major scale, has a formula of whole steps and half steps, making it possible to create a minor scale starting from any note.

Notes:	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**A**
Scale degree:	**1(R)**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8(R)**
Step:		**W**	**H**	**W**	**W**	**H**	**W**	**W**

Compared to a major scale, the 3rd, 6th and 7th degrees of A Minor are all a half step lower. These degrees are said to be flatted *or minor* and are indicated with a flat sign (♭3, ♭6, ♭7).

Key Signatures

A key signature is a collection of all the flats or sharps that are used in a particular scale. It is placed at the beginning of a line of music to indicate which notes should always be sharp or flat in that music, creating the sound of a particular key. For example, if you always sharp C and F, it will create the sound of the D Major scale, or the key of D.

Relative Minor

For every major key, there is a *relative minor key* which is built on the sixth tone of the major scale. For instance, in the key of C, the note A is the sixth tone (C D E F G A) so A Minor is the relative minor key to C Major. The example below shows all the key signatures with their corresponding major and minor keys.

MAJOR KEY	MINOR KEY	SHARPS/FLATS
C	A	none
G	E	F♯
D	B	F♯ C♯
A	F♯	F♯ C♯ G♯
E	C♯	F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯
B	G♯	F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯ A♯
F♯	D♯	F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯ A♯ E♯
C♯	A♯	F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯ A♯ E♯ B♯

MAJOR KEY	MINOR KEY	FLATS
F	D	B♭
B♭	G	B♭ E♭
E♭	C	B♭ E♭ A♭
A♭	F	B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭
D♭	B♭	B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭
G♭	E♭	B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ C♭
C♭	A♭	B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ C♭ F♭

John Entwhistle

is the bassist for The Who, one of the top British rock acts of all time. Their debut album was released in 1966, however, their major breakthrough came in 1969 with the recording of their rock opera, Tommy. John Entwistle has released several outstanding solo albums and toured with his solo group, Ox.

PHOTO CREDIT CHUCK PULIN / COURTESY OF STAR FILE,INC.

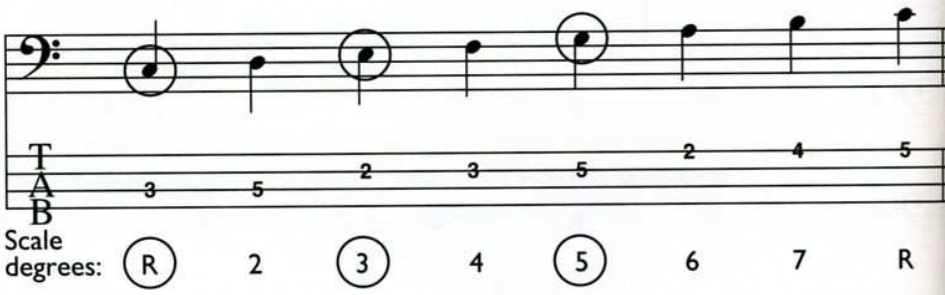
Chords

Most bass lines outline the chord structure of a tune. Knowing about chords is absolutely necessary for building bass lines. Chord knowledge, along with your ears, will help you choose the right notes for your bass lines. Two or more notes played together create a chord. Usually, a chord will have three or more notes.

A three note chord is called a *triad*. As in major scale construction, a chord is always built up from the root and includes a root (R), 3rd (3) and 5th (5).

There are four basic triad types: major, minor, augmented and diminished. All of these chord types have a quality or "color" that is different from the others. The quality of the major and minor chords is defined by the 3rd of the chord. The diminished chord gets it sound from the ♭3 and ♭5 of the chord. It's a good idea to train your ear to hear the difference between all the chord types. If you are trying to figure out a bass part by ear, knowing the "color of the chord" definitely helps!

This example shows how a three-note chord (*triad*) is constructed from a scale. The various alterations that are made to create the other triad types are shown below.



Major
Major chords always use the root (R), 3rd (3) and 5th (5) notes of the major scale.

C Major: R C, 3 E, 5 G

Minor
Minor chords use the root (R), flat 3rd (♭3) and 5th (5) notes above the root of the chord.

C Minor: R C, ♭3 E♭, 5 G

Diminished
Diminished chords use the root (R), flat 3rd (♭3) and flat 5th (♭5).

C Diminished: R C, ♭3 E♭, ♭5 G♭

Augmented
Augmented chords use the root (R), 3rd (3) and sharp 5th (♯5).

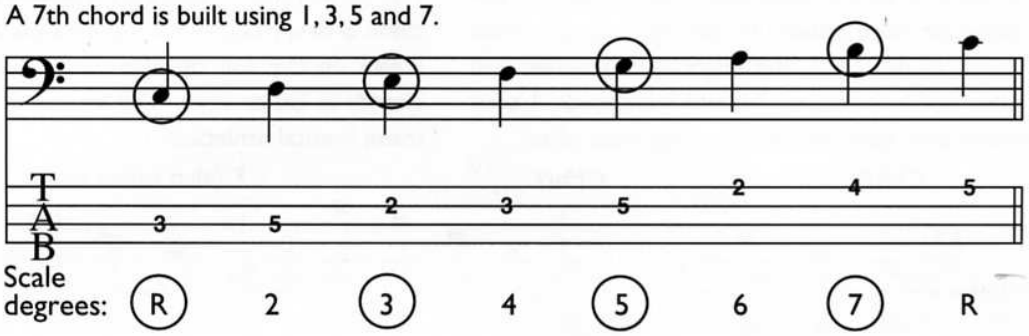
C Augmented: R C, 3 E, ♯5 G♯

Chord Extensions

You may have heard musicians talk about chords with numbers attached to them like 7, 9, 11 and 13. Or maybe you've seen symbols in sheet music such as C7, Dmin11, FMaj9, etc. and you're not quite sure what they mean.

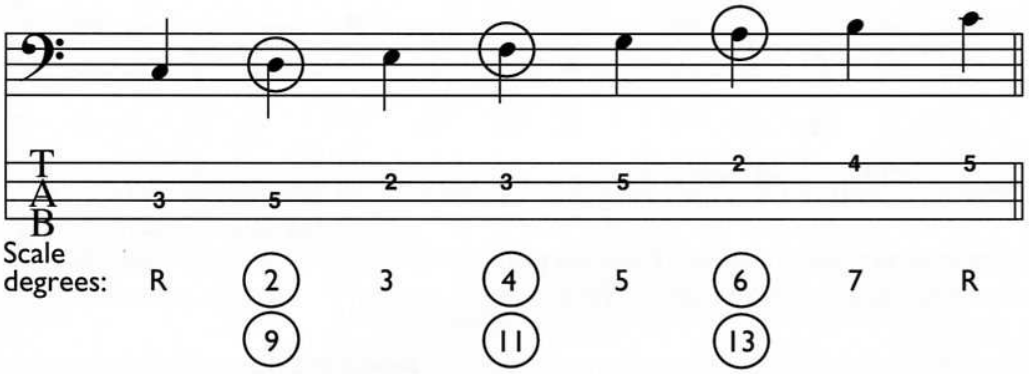
The numbers involved represent chord extensions. They refer to chords that have at least four notes. Let's look at the major scale to get an idea how these extended chords are constructed.

A 7th chord is built using 1, 3, 5 and 7.



Let's take a look at where the 9, 11 and 13 come from. In the major scale, the eighth note is the same as the first. Since that's true, it also follows that 9 is the same as 2, only 9 is an octave higher. Look at the scale below to find the 11 and 13.

Notice that all the circled notes are a 3rd apart (3rds are separated by one note of the scale, as in E to G, which are separated by one note, F). Theoretically, we think of this as "stacking 3rds."

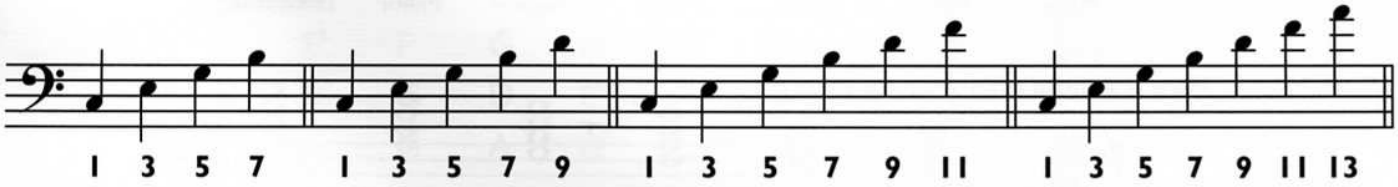


9 is the same as 2 an octave higher — 1 3 5 7 9 = 9th chord

11 is the same as 4 an octave higher — 1 3 5 7 9 11 = 11th chord

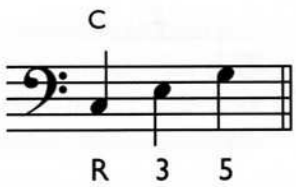
13 is the same as 6 an octave higher — 1 3 5 7 9 11 13 = 13th chord

The example below shows 7th, 9th, 11th and 13th chords in the key of C. It is important to note that keyboardists and guitarists will not usually play all of the notes in these chords. They will *voice* (arrange the notes of) the chords according to various rules. For creating a bass line, however, all of the notes are important. Since we will be building lines with these notes and not block chords, we will look at all of them spread out and not in actual stacks of 3rds.

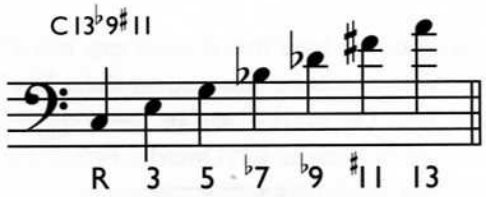


7th & 9th Chords

Chords can be very simple...

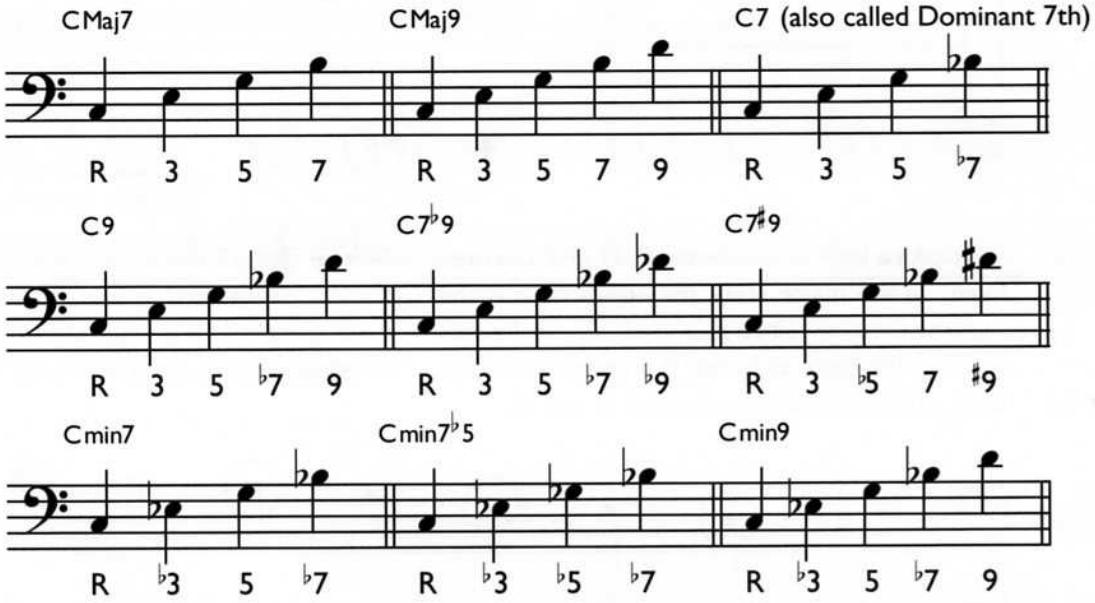


or complex.



Anyone creating bass lines, regardless of any particular style, should be familiar with all chord types. In this book, the majority of grooves and tunes will be based on 7th and 9th chords. Listed below are those we will be using most often.

Play through all of these chords and try to learn them in every key. If you need to, use the chart of scales on the top of page 90 to help build the chords in other keys. Dig in and have fun with these mental athletics!

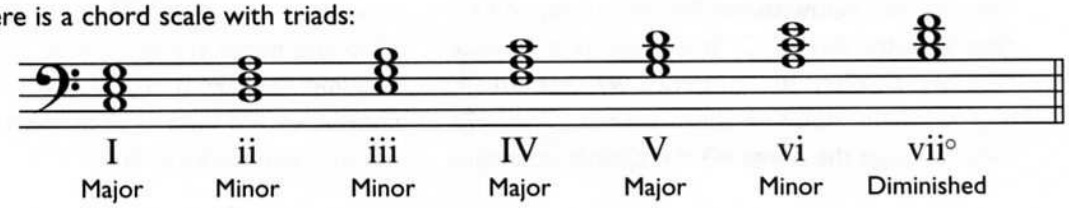


Chord Scales- Diatonic Harmony

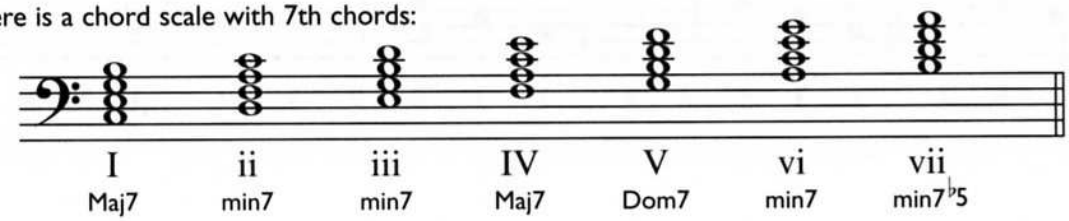
Diatonic means "within the key." If you are playing diatonically, you are playing the notes or chords that come from just one major scale.

The *chord scale* is what happens when you build a chord on every note of a major scale. These are diatonic chords, and they are categorized by Roman numerals so they can be used in any key. The uppercase Roman numerals indicate a major chord. Lowercase Roman numerals are used for minor triads, and lowercase Roman numerals with an "°"indicate a diminished triad. All three of these basic chord types occur in every major key. When chords are arranged in a specific sequence to fit a melody or song, they create what is called a *chord progression*. Knowing the chord progression is essential when creating a bass line. There is a handy chart on page 95 that will help you find the diatonic chord in every key.

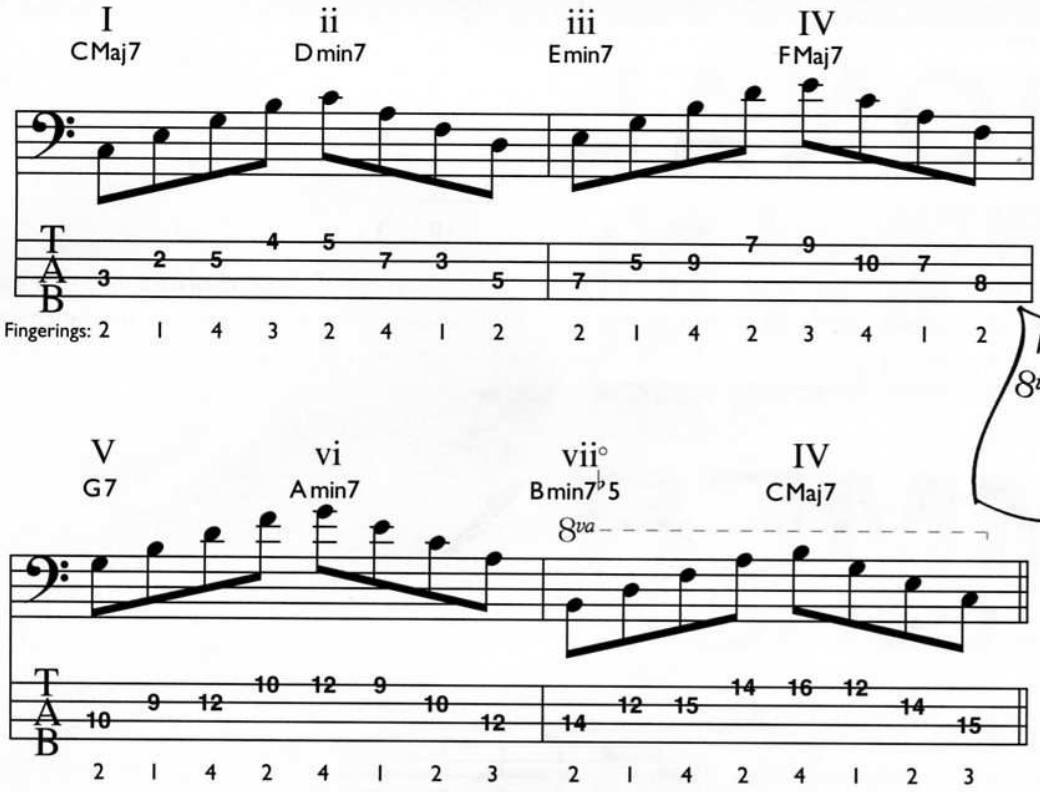
Here is a chord scale with triads:



Here is a chord scale with 7th chords:



Here's a good scale exercise using 7th chords. Learn this in every key, up and down:



NOTE PAD:
8va = All'ottava. Play the passage one octave higher than written.

Appendix

I through vii in All Keys

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii	I
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
D	E	F♯	G	A	B	C♯	D
A	B	C♯	D	E	F♯	G♯	A
E	F♯	G♯	A	B	C♯	D♯	E
F♯	G♯	A♯	B	C♯	D♯	E♯	F♯
D♭	E♭	F	G♭	A♭	B♭	C	D♭
A♭	B♭	C	D♭	E♭	F	G	A♭
E♭	F	G	A♭	B♭	C	D	E♭
B♭	C	D	E♭	F	G	A	B♭
F	G	A	B♭	C	D	E	F